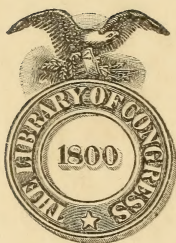




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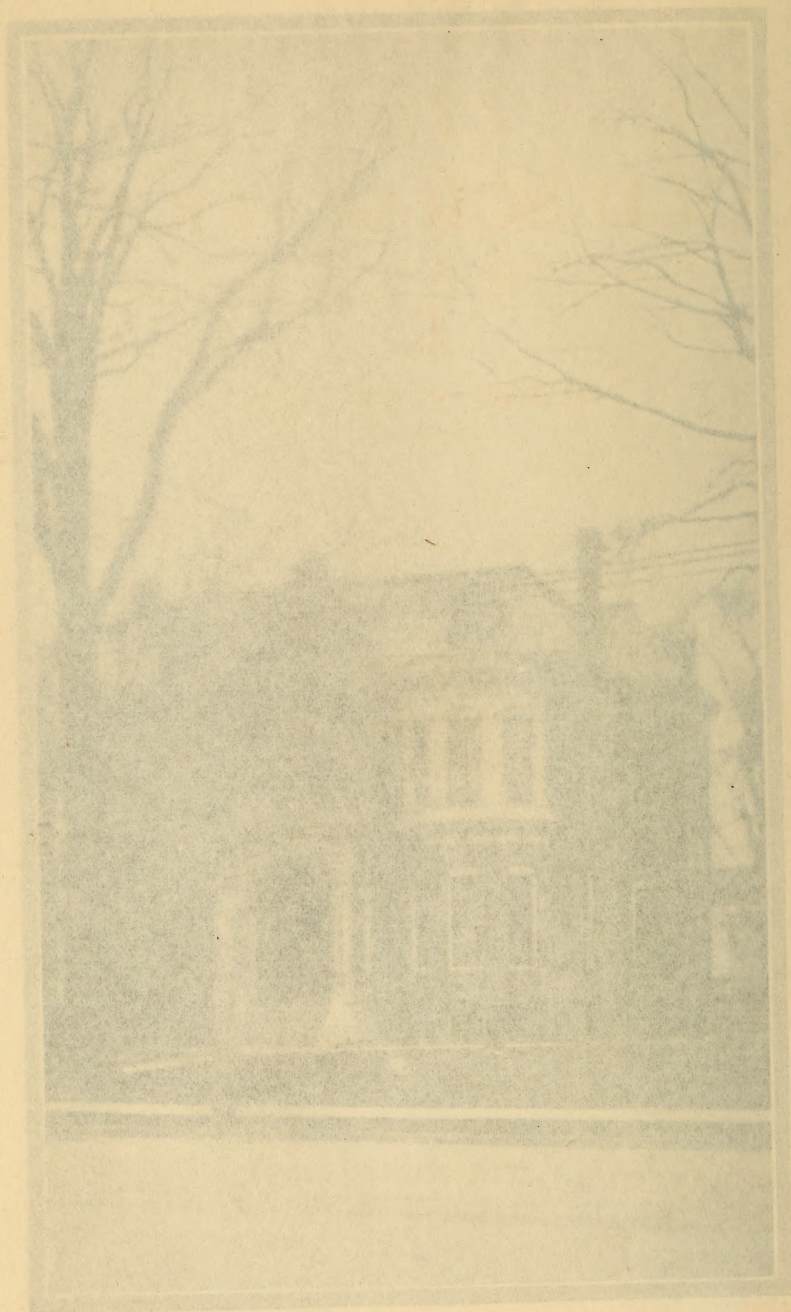
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THE OLD SCRAP BOOK





THE OLD HOME

The
OLD SCRAP BOOK

BY
SUSAN M. SWALES
(ERNEST BELL)



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To
THE GIRLS AND BOYS
OF THE OLD HOME
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

FOREWORD

Among the pear and apple trees stood the old home. Its windows and its porches were embowered in clematis and wild grape vines; its walls were buried in ivy; its rooms were large and lofty and filled with the happy laughter of boys and girls; and now like last year's nest it is deserted. In the beautiful quiet of God's acre sleep the Father and Mother; the boys and girls have gone to new homes; business houses have crowded it to its very doors; automobiles and street cars rush by every minute; the beautiful old orchard is destroyed, and the house is abandoned.

Among the accumulations of so many years an old trunk was found. In it, still in their time-stained old scrap-book, undisturbed for nearly forty years were found many of these poems and stories. They were written when the clouds of war enshrouded the land; when fields were untilled and fruit ungathered; when "the mourners went about the streets," and now with these added poems of later years like the fragrance of the old garden wafted to us by a gentle breeze may they pleasantly recall that vanished time of romance and of our old home.

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THE OLD SCRAP BOOK

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POEMS WRITTEN IN GIRLHOOD

OUR UNION OF BROTHERS

'Neath the flag of Our Union for years we have rested,
Together we've cherished each glorious star;
Together the turmoils, the storms, we have breasted,
Nor dreamed we that aught our fair Union could mar.

One fair band of brothers — each other relieving,
In troubles and trials, in dangers of war;
'Neath the wide-waving banner each brother believing —
And trusting so truly each bright-beaming star.

Yet still wave these star-gems o'er scenes as endearing,
O'er mountains and streamlets as lovely and fair,
But a soft-gliding serpent our Eden is nearing,
And longeth to bury his poisoned fangs there.

Oh, unthinking brothers! your troubles forgetting,
Come join ye together, in heart and with hand,
So ward off the serpent; the danger besetting,
And leave our fair Eden a holier land.

Dear star-banded brothers, so rash and unthinking,
Desert not thy posts as the danger draws nigh;
Stretch forth hands of friendship — now firm and unshrinking,
In love and in unison, Conquer, or Die.

Our Father in Heaven will give us his blessings,
The Star-spangled banner triumphantly wave;
And each to the other his failures confessing
We form a new league 'round our Washington's grave.

January 20th, 1861. High School.

THE DYING SOLDIER

"Poor David Mercer — no man ever lived more brave, more generous, more devoted to his friends and his flag. His right arm was shot off about half way between the elbow and shoulder. He came to me in the woods immediately back of the firing, and whilst he held his musket and his right arm in his left hand, he begged me to cut it off, as it was so heavy he couldn't carry his musket, and when loss of blood forced him to drop his gun, he asked for a revolver to continue the fight. Just before his death, some one spoke of his dying in defense of the old flag, when he faintly attempted to sing 'The Star Spangled Banner.' One line was almost completed, when his brave soul went to its God." (Captain J. C. Hazlett's letter.)

Upon the bloody battlefield — beneath a rugged tree,
A noble-hearted soldier stood, reclining wearily;
One arm, completely shattered, was hanging at his side,
Yet still to hold his musket, the brave young soldier tried.

And when the Captain saw him, amid the dark affray,
He pointed to his severed arm, and faintly tried to say;
"Look here a moment Captain — cut off this useless arm,
I cannot hold my musket to do the Rebels harm."

Until his frame grew weary, and faintly came his breath,
The soldier with his one brave arm dealt to the Rebels death;
And when the heavy musket fell from his nerveless hand,
He asked for a revolver to fight the Rebel band.

Amid the thickest of the fight the noble soldier stood,
Until he fell from faintness and heavy loss of blood;
And when his brow grew dewy, and the brightness left his eye,
The soldiers gathered 'round him to see their comrade die.

When someone spoke of Freedom's flag a faint glow
flushed his cheek,

And his pale lips were parted, as if he fain would speak;
And when the soldiers listened to catch the sound they gave,
He faintly sung — “The Star Spangled Banner, long may
it wave.”

Ah! when the cold lips trembled to form their farewell word,
A blessing on our Banner, was all the soldiers heard;
It was his dying whisper, and doubly blessed we know
Is our Dear Flag since one brave heart has loved it so.

And tho' to hear his voice, or clasp his hand is not given,
Yet have we one more spirit now, before the throne of
Heaven,
And well we know that our lost Mercer, bravest of the Brave,
Will call down blessings on the holy cause he died to save.

July 17, 1861.

FOR — 'S ALBUM

Darling — I would treasure
Life's sweet roses all for thee,
I would hope that paths of flowers
Ever more thine own might be.
But I know that God has ordered
That which seemeth to Him best,
Darkest clouds with sunlight bordered,
Days of anguish, nights of rest.

May He guard thee, may He guide thee,
By His love in every ill,
In thy joy be close beside thee
In thy griefs be near thee still.
His the strength that shall uphold thee
Through this weary night of strife,
His the arms that shall enfold thee
In the morning dawn of life.

October 10, 1862.

FORGETTING HE IS DEAD

I sit beside my casement
To listen for his tread;
To hearken to his merry tones,
Forgetting he is dead,

And at the close of even,
I raise my humble prayer;
I pray kind Heaven to watch my boy,
Forgetting he is there.

And at first peep of dawning
I hie to little bed,
To kiss the slumber from his brow,
Forgetting he is dead.

And on last Christmas morning,
Like frighten'd bird I fled,
To wish him "Merry Christmas,"
Forgetting he is dead.

But I think of him at even,
When the long, long day has fled:
Ah! then I feel too truly
Our darling boy is dead.

The City Times, 1863.

SUFFER AND BE STRONG

Not always will the sunshine
Of joys your pathway throng,
But when you grope in darkness
Oh, suffer and be strong.
Not always will the shadow
Envelope you in gloom,
Beneath the deepest hedges
The brightest violets bloom.

From out the direst trials
The soul comes forth again
Not weary now, but stronger,
And finer for the pain;
And the strange fires of genius
Grow yet more strangely bright,
As stars show all their glory
But in the darkest night.

Our glorious bard of England
His pinions never tried
Till God had drawn a veil between
His soul and all beside;
Till he had closed his eyelids
And given a poet's heart,
And through the world him, weary, led
Of it, yet not a part.

Though he but guessed the plumage
Of birdlings from their song,
Though for him the sun ne'er shone
Yet suffering he was strong.
And from his mind's dark prison
He gave us gleams again
Of light that lingered in his heart
Thro' all those years of pain.

And in these bitter trials
When furious plagues were hurled
He gave his hand to God who'd sealed
Himself from all the world.
So tenderly He guided him,
A blind man through the throng
That, mighty in his Father's might,
He suffered, yet was strong.

March, 1863.

THE CATASTROPHE

All Nature had in quiet wrapped
Herself in peaceful sleep,
And naught there seemed upon the Earth
That would not silence keep.
And Mr. Muggins, happy now,
With bedspread wrapped around him
Resigned himself with quiet joy
To Morpheus' chains which bound him.

But hark — a sound within his room,
A sound yet faint — but dire,
He started up — he clutched the clothes
And drew them up yet higher.
But all in vain those heavy clothes,
The sound was still in hearing,
Poor Muggins crept yet lower down
Hid head and ears — so fearing —.

Still came the sound — but nearer now —
And with a fearful boldness,
And Muggins felt adown his limbs
A chill of bitter coldness.
That sound again! In desperate fear
He brought himself to battle,
But as the clothes were pushed away
Each joint began to rattle.

His right hand grasped a pistol found
Beneath his weary head,
He grasped — and then in trembling tones
And halting accents said —
“Who are you now! Oh, please to leave
For I don't want to shoot.
So go, for if you don't you know
'Tis you that makes me do it.”

He paused a moment — listened — then
The sound was getting nearer;
Cold blood stood still in all his veins
His life appeared then dearer.
He closed his eyes, drew in his breath
And then — the pistol sounded —
And in the moment's glare he saw
A "skeeter" falling wounded!

June 28, 1863.

THE GRADUATES' FAREWELL

I

Gently as the stars of Heaven
Vanish from the coming dawn,
So the joys of childhood leave us
As we journey,— one by one,—
As we journey from the dawning
Deep into the day of life,
Leaving childhood's dewy morning,
Entering woman's noon of strife.

II

Linger,— linger,— let us linger,
Ere the clouds of parting come,
Shutting out the golden sun-light
By the shadows of its gloom;
Sadly, sadly now, and slowly,
Must we hear the bitter knell,
Flooding every heart with sorrow,
Tolling forth its sad — "Farewell."

III

Oh, farewell! farewell, dear schoolmates,
Souls must cling the closer now,
And this bitter hour of parting
Leave its trace on lip and brow.

But in future fields Elysian
Once again we hope to meet,
And the links which here are severed,
There shall a chain complete.

June 25, 1863.

THE RAIN

Merrily, mournfully, pattering still,
Falling like dew on the flowers,
Singing, and sighing, and moaning at will,
Falleth the rain all the hours;
Dancing so merrily over the eaves,
Falling like music's refrain,
Hiding its gems in the heart of the leaves,
Merrily falleth the rain.

Falling and falling cheerily still,
It kisses the lilies' white breast;
Over the meadows it wanders at will,
Lulling the blue-bells to rest.
Merrily, cheerily falleth the rain
Over the country and town,
Like the soft murmur of music's refrain,
The fairy-like rain cometh down.

The rain, the rain, the beautiful rain,
Sadly and sweetly it falls,
To the souls of the dead, where the grass groweth green,
In sweet spirit voices it calls;
It makes, with its murmurs of grief,
The flowers to blow o'er each head,
And by its sweet treasures of rose-bud and leaf
Makes lovely the homes of the dead,

The rain, the rain, the beautiful rain,
The merrily, mournfully falling,

The echo of footsteps that fall not again,
Strange voices to earth ever calling;
The whispers of magic that maketh the buds,
In beauty and frailty to grow,
The message of mercy to man from his God,
Proclaiming "All peace be below."

June 29, 1863.

IN MEMORIAM

Charles E. Hazlett, 1st Lieutenant, U. S. A., commanding Battery D, 5th Corps, U. S. Artillery, was killed on Rock Hill, at the Battle of Gettysburg, Pa., on Thursday, July 2nd, 1863, in the 25th year of his age, struck by an unseen bullet in the forehead. He fell forward upon the breast of a dying friend to whom he was ministering, and breathed his life away without a word or groan.

Weep for the lovely who've perished in beauty,
Weep for the buds which have withered in bloom,
But for the brave who have died doing duty
Bear them in glory, thro' tears, to their tomb.

One of our number — a brave hearted soldier,
Left us in sorrow when danger appeared,
In that brave army there was not a bolder,
None lived more nobly, none died more revered.

On the red plain of the dark field of battle
Aiding a friend who was dying, he bent,
Catching his words, 'mid the bullet's sharp rattle,
When the death angel, to call him, was sent.

He heard not the pinions, the angel was nearing,
His labor accomplished — his life work was o'er,
Fallen on the breast of the friend he was cheering
He slumbered, to waken to toil never more.

What needs of accents, shall the story's repeating,
Bring to the fore-head its halo of light.

Start the still pulses that lately were beating,
Make those glazed eyes once again brave and light?

Gone from us! gone from us! this is the tolling,
Gone, to return to the Earth, never more,
This is the dirge that forever is rolling
Up to our hearts from Eternity's shore.

Aye but tho' angels sweet garlands are throwing
Down from the gates of the city of love
Garlands of hope and their perfume in flowing,
Brings balm to the wounded, "Our Hazlett's above."

July 29, 1863.

"BIRDIE"

Little birdie, list a moment
Listen closely — don't you hear
That the rushing, roaring river
Of the past is drawing near?
Swift 'twill bear upon its bosom
Present joys to which we cling,
Little buds of purest pleasures
And for these 'twill nothing bring.

We must lose these, little Birdie,
But my bird must fly to me
Fold its weary wings, then gladly
Cheer me with its pleasant glee.
Little daisy, you will flourish
Sweetly in my lowly home,
Lily-of-the-valley — lily —
Little daisy, won't you come?

June 19, 1863.

SUMMER MORNING

Darling, the morn is bright
Gleaming with softened light,
Thro' silver clouds.
Softly the wood birds drum,
Laz'ly the insects hum,
Wheeling in clouds.

Softly the summer breeze
Rustles the poplar trees
Over the way.
Touches the bird on nest
Ruffles her downy breast
Gently to-day.

Even the languid air
Seemeth too faint to bear
Roses' perfume.
And the sweet roses stand
Half blown on every hand
Too faint to bloom.

See, borne along the sky
Dreaming the light clouds lie
Drifting away.
All things are indolent
All nature somnolent
This summer's day.

And in a languid sort
Half earnest, half in sport
Write I this rhyme.
For every summer tone
Brings back to me your own
In vanished time.

When you and I sat here
Watching the poplars, dear,

Over the way.
Talking in careless chime
Yet loving all the time
As I, to-day.

Darling, best have a care
My heart may faint to bear
Your love's perfume.
Yet weigh it down, my sweet,
And for your love complete
Make it a tomb.

Drifting, I slowly sail
Down thro' the azure pale
Fearing no storm.
As leaflets lie at rest
Floating on streamlet's breast
Restfully on,

On to the ocean, wide
Borne by the silver tide
Surely tho' slow.
So drift I to the sea
Of love's infinity
Loving thee so.

ERNEST BELL.

From my window, July 2, 1864.

“NOW I LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP”

See the battle rages 'round him,
With the dead on every side;
Loosed the silver chord which bound him,
He is dying as they died,
See the ruby life-blood gushing,
Listen to the quick drawn breath,
Even his great spirit hushing
To the greater one of death.

'Mid the groanings of the dying,
'Mid the shoutings of the fray;
Boom of cannon, shriek and crying,
Can you tell me what they say?
Those poor lips were only saying
Some sweet words which made him weep —
Words his mother taught him, praying
“Now I lay me down to sleep.”

Time had been when those rude fingers
Close had clasped at mother's knee,
And her presence-halo lingers
Still around that infancy.
Oh how kind she was, and tender,
How she taught her boy to pray,
Little dreaming he would send her
Thanks for it on such a day.

Coldly the death dew is pressing
On the brow so often pressed
By his mother's hand in blessing,
Ere he sought his nightly rest,
Oh that she cannot be near him,
Though he calls her o'er and o'er,
Oh that she can never hear him,
Though he calls her ever more.

Now the weak hands clasp each other,
As they did long years ago,
When he knelt beside his mother
In the evening's firelight glow;
And the eyes with tears are filling,
Though they never more shall weep;
Speak the lips, though coldly thrilling,
“Now I lay me down to sleep.”

Softly, with a child's sweet trusting,
'Mid the dying and the dead,

Where the swords in blood were rusting,
Sank the soldier's weary head.
Guarded by the God of battles,
Prayed the "Lord his soul to keep,"
'Mid the roaring and the rattle,
Then he "laid him down to sleep."

And the God above him bending,
Surely knew the voice again,
Though this time it was ascending,
From the battle on the plain.
Knew — and for the Savior's glory,
Whom he prayed his soul to keep —
Let the soldier, brave and gory,
Rest him in a quiet sleep.

February 1865.

FINEM RESPICE

Once a fond eagle was building her nest,
Said she, "I will have it dry,"
So she chose for its place a mountain crest
That rose to the summer sky;
And she feathered it warm from her own tender breast,
That her young might the softer lie.

And the waves of a foreign sea dashed o'er
Many a rock on the coral strand;
And they lashed in their fury the out-stretched shore,
Till the foam lay white on the glistening sand;
Still the eagle in peace unmolested could soar
To her nest in its eyrie sagaciously planned.

Then the rain poured down and the furious storm
Broke over her nest in the mountain high;
But she opened out her pinions so large and so warm,
And kept her young eagles safe and dry;
And so they were guarded and shielded from harm
By the One watching over who heareth their cry.

By strange metamorphosis — one pitiful day
The mother's pet eaglet was changed to a snake,
And it coiled round the nest in a serpent-like way,
Until the frail fabric was ready to break;
It seized the young eagles, its brothers, for prey,
And its mother's own life attempted to take.

Oh, she who had guarded her nestlings so well,
That none of the elements boded them ill —
The winds when they rose, or the storms when they fell —
Had not thought to guard 'gainst her favorite's will,
Yet more than all elements, hard to repel,
Than winds or than waters more dangerous still.

With kindness she pleaded, the fond mother bird;
These prayers he received with his ugliest hiss;
He struck with his fangs for the councils he heard;
Then the way she resorted to conquer was this:
She struck with her beak, which was sharp as a sword,
She struck with her talons, which came not amiss.

So the battle went on 'tween mother and son;
The serpent his venomous poison expressed;
Of all her young nestlings this favorite one
The mother had oftenest warmed at her breast;
And now she must conquer — the battle is done,
But many young eagles are dead in the nest.

And so she must conquer — our eagle must reign;
Be queen of her nest though the loved traitor die!
Oh, would that such love could his passions restrain,
And again in the nest he would lovingly lie;
But we know the serpent will not change again —
As such he has lived, and as such he will die.

Our Union must conquer — the rebel be hurled
Away from the nest; the snake must be dead,
And the Star-spangled banner in glory unfurled.
The bruise must be made in the serpent's head,

And the white doves of peace shall brood over the world,
When traitors have perished and treason has fled!

March 16, 1865. *New York Weekly.*

TOKENS

There's a cap hanging up in the entry,
An overcoat lies in the hall,
And a sword with its scabbard blood-rusty,
Hangs up by the cap on the wall.
Oh, these saddest of tokens have borne me,
Like the waves of the ocean, away,
To the times that have come and have passed me
And vanished this many a day.

To the time when the cap sat so jauntily,
On the short, sunny clusters of curls,
And the eyes 'neath its brim grew so dusky.
When saying "good-bye" to the "girls";
When the overcoat held in its wrapping
The dearest of forms to us all,
And the sword then so bright in its scabbard,
Was not hanging there on the wall.

Now the autumn froze into the winter,
And the winter soon melted to spring,
And the mails brought us dearest of tidings,
The rarest that letters could bring;
There were messages plenty for "mother,"
And kisses all 'round to the "girls,"
And once, lest the kisses be lonely,
He sent us each one of his curls.

Though the season passed brightly, it shadowed
The brow of our mother with care;
And a few silver threads stole in softly
To light up the dark in her hair;

Though her smiles grew more patiently tender,
She lovingly cheered up the "girls,"
For no letters came from the absent —
No messages, kisses, or curls.

But at last came a stranger to see us —
A soldier in uniform too —
He carried a sword and a package,
And saddest of tidings, we knew.
"With his last words he sent these to mother,"
The stranger said, brushing his eyes,
"He fell in the heat of the battle,
"And there on the battle-field lies."

"He said: 'Tell the girls to love mother,
And say that my last thought was pain
For the dearest of dear ones I'm leaving,
Though hoping to meet them again!'"
Then the stranger put down on the table
The sword and the package he bore,
And went away, leaving night's darkness
Where day shone a moment before.

Oh, the brow with its beautiful whiteness,
And clustering ringlets of hair,
Cannot need, nor want for a shelter
The cap which he used once to wear.
Now the overcoat lies in the entry,
For chrysalis-like, in its birth,
The beautiful soul of our darling
Has cast off the garments of earth.

Oh, we know that he never will hasten
To battle at bugle's loud call,
And the sword which he grasped for his country
May rust on its nail on the wall;
God grant that the lives he has taken,
Since taken for country and right,
May not count as a crime in the judgment,
Or make his bright crown the less bright.

Oh, the dear dusty cap in the entry!
 Oh, overcoat out in the hall!
 And sword now useless in its scabbard,
 As it hangs by the cap on the wall.
 How they bring up the form of our darling,
 And the days which have vanished from me,
 As the shells, though removed from the ocean,
 Still murmur the sound of the sea!

March 25, 1865.

SMILES AND TEARS

Oh, I laugh and I sigh, and I weep awhile,
 Like the ficklest of April weather;
 I chase off the tears with the sunniest smile,
 And I laugh and I cry both together;
 For a blessing has come, and its beautiful price,
 Like a bird in my heart softly nestles;
 But a trial has come, and low on my knees
 My heart in its agony wrestles.

A blessing and trial! one breath speaks them both,
 But Oh! how they differ in feeling!
 My soul bendeth down so reluctantly, loth
 To take up the sorrow with healing.
 Oh, my heart in its gratitude looketh above,
 Like lily-buds after the rain.
 But it bendeth again 'neath the loss of its love,
 And almost courts death in its pain.

The haughty are fallen — and conquers the right;
 Joy rises sun-like o'er the nation,
 And every heart lifts its tribute to-night
 Of thanks for its country's salvation;
 But Oh! from my heart and my hearth there is one
 That forever I know must be missing —
 The darlingest brother, the tenderest son
 That ever was barred in prison.

So young and so handsome, so full of fresh youth,
That his heart was forever out-singing;
His eyes looked in yours with an immortal truth,
And his laugh filled your heart with its ringing.
Oh, the close clinging curls on his beautiful head,
We all were so fond of their beauty,
That he took them to war, he laughingly said,
To see that they did their whole duty.

And the eyes, and the curls, and the laugh of our boy,
They were all put in prison together,
And his eyes, and his curls, and his laughter and joy,
Faded out like stars in dark weather:
And he died — he, our sunlight, our beautiful pride,
For the love of his country and nation —
By the slowest and sternest of all deaths he died —
In prison — of utter starvation.

Oh, my heart may weave out the bright woof of its joy,
For our dear peace's happy returning,
But the threads of deep sadness, in thought of our boy,
Must change it somewhat into mourning.
Oh, then here are smiles for my dear native land,
And here are the tears for our losses:
A grief and a joy must go hand in hand,
And crowns only blossom near crosses.

Ann Arbor, July 5, 1865.

THE JOURNEY

A wandering Honorary Member of the Nameless Club looking over a budget of old letters comes upon an extract from the chronicles of the nation of the De-ga-ya-yoh, setting forth that in the year of our Lord eighteen sixty-three on the twenty-third day of the seventh month "a stranger from the land which lyeth to the Southe" was adopted into the nation by the unanimous vote of its members.

The quaint and genial chapter evokes from the buried past a memory of the few but pleasant occasions on which it was the stranger's happy fortune to meet the nation around the social board, and with it arise questions of the present — How is it with the nation? Do its sons and daughters still

gather around the council fire? Who shall answer? Spirits of air, floating to the music of your own low song across the blue waves of Erie, can ye tell? Low hanging clouds, white as the curtains which shut in a dreaming angel, have you in your ever changing panorama no image of them? All are dumb. Avaunt, false Spirits! We will ourselves look into the matter.

Fancy, prepare thy swift car
We'll ride to-night, your lustrous star
That in the east makes paler day
Shall guide and light our pathless way.

Away now joy-ful riding,
Both time and space dividing
So merrily we're gliding
Away, away, away!

The bright waves kiss the glistening sand,
Faint odors fill the autumn air;
I feel the night's magnetic hand
Fall soft and cool on brow and hair.

Now fade all sounds of Earth's poor strife,
The restless heart forgets its pain
And all the tangled ends of life
Are knit in one harmonious chain.

Up through the misty curtains dim
Float liquid murmurs from the deep
Like broken strains from some grand hymn
Hummed by a dreamer in his sleep.

And now we glide past dusky isles
Whence summer lingeringly departs,
Whose eager grapes have drunk her smiles
And hold them prisoned in their hearts.

In lake side towns the distant lights
Make meteor gleams low down the sky,
And beacons flash from friendly lights
Their warning of a danger nigh.

I know the tower on yonder pier,
The light that gleams beyond, I know,
Stop fancy,— now, my vision clear
Describes the streets of Buffalo.

I know a room in a building fair
Not very far from the public square;
Choice old spirits are gathered there
Having a jolly good time.

I'll peep in at the window high,
They'll never guess that I am by;
It's rare good fun to play Paul Pry,
And peeping surely is no crime.

Well, well it grows late,
There is still the debate,
But fancy is weary and home I must fly,
Or I may run afoul
Of some wandering owl
And wreck my frail car in the deeps of the sky.

It is the season of farewells,
O'er lake and wood a chorus swells
Oh, fairy voices, chanting low
A refrain full of tender woe.

Farewell, farewell, sweet summer lies
With pale, dumb lips and veiled eyes;
The buds she latest kissed to bloom
Woke only to adorn her tomb.
To sweetest music in her praise
The birds that sit the long bright days
Refuse another love to woo,
And bids the changing world "Adieu."

Farewell, the battle clouds are riven,
Peace lifts her radiant face to Heaven,
And from the Southland voices come

Calling her banished children home.
O noble Northland, true as fair
I go, but in my heart I wear
Such pictures of thy regal grace
As even death may not efface.

And though, when next year's birds piping clear
Wake to new life the 'tranced year,
My feet shall tread the distant shores
Where mighty Mississippi pours
His amber tide; my spirit, free
Shall wander back to dwell with thee.
To haunt again thy leafy glades
Where all day long the bright cascades
Lured by the river's witching call
Go flashing down the rocky hall.

Once more to dream the hours away
On slopes where lights and shadows play,
And drink with ever fresh delight
The nectar of thy beauty bright.

But not alone the mystic spell
Which cunning nature weaves so well,
Of emerald hills and water-falls
And forest full of summer calls,
Shall draw me back, true hearted band
Who welcomed with free out-stretched hand
The exile wandering far and alone,
And wrote her name among your own,
Your generous trust and kindness make
A link that distance cannot break.
Farewell, but when you keep your feast
Think something of your spirit guest,
And when you pledge the absent, feel,
She pledges you with faith as leal.

Farewell! May every breeze that blows
Shower blessings pure as winter snows,

And triumph crown your every aim
Till "nameless" means "Success" and "Fame."

Detroit, September 25, 1865.

TO GERTRUDE

Forty years ago, my darling,
When the Christmas wreath was made,
When beneath the snow-clad forest,
Thou and I together strayed,
Dost remember how we lingered
From the cheerful Christmas band?
Each was all in all to other,
As we wandered, hand in hand.

Little Gertrude, let me call you
By my favorite name of then;
Though that then so full of gladness
Never more may come again.
Dear, your eyes were full of laughter,
Fairest were you of the girls;
And I know I thought the sunbeams
Had got tangled in your curls.

I remember well the evening —
That same glowing Christmas night;
Then I thought that life was perfect,
And its skies forever bright.
Little Gertrude, now the snow-flakes
Time has scattered on each tress —
Made your curls hold Christmas, darling,
By his silvering caress.
Forty years have we been parted —
Forty years! how long it seems,
Since with many a ling'ring fondness,
Learned we what departure means.

Parted, you so strong in duty,
Aye, so saint-like in God's grace,
That I looked to see a halo
Shine about your holy face.

Fare you well, my little Gertrude,
We are on the ebbing tide;
On the shore of life, my darling,
I will claim you for my bride.
Now I say, "Good night," my darling,
For the night's around our way;
I will bid you sweet "Good morning,"
In the dawning of the day.

New York Weekly, November 2, 1865.

FLOWER TEACHINGS

Lowly bends the drooping lily
To the fury of the blast;
Folds its petals, soft and pearly,
And the rain-drops clasp them fast —
Clasp her cloak of fleecy velvet
With a rain-drop diamond pin;
Draws the folds about her bosom,
Lest the cold should venture in.

Shall not He who wraps the lily
From the fury of the blast,
Fold a cloak about thee, mortal,
In his kindness clasp it fast,
Shield thee from the raging tempest,
Wrap thee in his arms awhile,
Till, the fierce storm safely over,
Thou mayest open in his smile?

Thou, O mortal, like the lily,
Open sweet thy lily-cup;
Like the gentle air of Heaven
Bear thy grateful incense up

From thy inmost heart, the sweetest,
Purest perfume of thy love;
Prayer, and praise, and gentle actions —
These will angels bear above.

New York Weekly, November 23, 1865.

HAVING A PICTURE TAKEN

If you think you've seen a funny scene,
I think you are mistaken;
The funniest scene that ever was seen,
Is "having your picture taken."
The line of beauty we know isn't straight,
But the line of your back must be, sir,
And the opposite sides of your delicate head
Are squeezed in the prongs of tweezer.

Your eyes must be fixed in your head, sir,
With a dire and deadly staring,
And trying to get the mouth pursed up,
Is sure to make it glaring.
And then the hands — Oh dear! Oh dear!
The fingers will keep a-twitching;
And in the midst of it all, your nose
Is sure to get itching.

Oh, I often have noted with laughing eyes
The victim being taken;
The angles formed by every limb
Are not to be mistaken.
The mouth drawn down at corners, with
The nose in elevation,
And all together the "picture scene,"
Is the drollest in creation.

Talking of likenesses, we will append some witty verses from a favorite contributor, "Ernest Bell," descriptive of the actions of some persons when they are having a picture taken.

New York Weekly, April 27, 1865.

LITTLE FLIRT!

Haughty sunflower, bend your blossom —
Let me find the culprit there,
You have hidden in your blossom;
Is it just, or is it fair,
That with swaying — softly swaying,
You should lull him to repose,
When the tender things he's saying,
Are high treason to the rose?

Ah! I spy the gay deceiver,
Though you fold him up so sly,
In your loving — poor believer! —
Who shall capture him but I?
For I see his yellow jacket,
Laced with black, or deepest blue;
And I see the honey packet,
Which I know he stole from you.

And I hear him softly murmur
Loving nothings, sweet and low.
Silly flower! Why, all this summer
He's been coquetting just so;
Roses, lilies, blue-eyed pansies,
Each he loved, and dearly too,
While they pleased his idle fancies —
Just as he is loving you.

Then he left them. Ah! proud flower! —
Of your amber and your gold
Do not make a secret bower,
That vain trifle to enfold.
See, he's thinking now of parting —
Plumes his wings for final flight —
Takes his honey — says at parting:
"I'm weary — so, good night."

O, the little fickle lover!
O, the busy buzzing bee!
Formed for ever more to love her,
None should be so true as he.
Haughty sunflower! bend your blossom:
He has left you long ago —
He has flown from out your bosom —
Ta'en your honey, too, you know.

Ann Arbor, June 1, 1865.

VIGILS

In a kind of misty daylight,
In the shadowy land of sleep,
With the dead and the departed
I my vigils often keep.
And I cannot think I'm dreaming
Tho' I know it is not real
Tho' I know upon my eyelids
God has set His silent seal.

Shadowy faces crowd about me
Smiling back the smile I give,
And I cannot think them shadows
Seeming so to love and live.
Backward from my burdened shoulders
Rolls the weight of weary years,
There's no care upon my forehead,
In my eye no trace of tears.

Once again my ringlets cluster
O'er a brow too young and fair
Yet to have the seal of sorrow
Or Time's signet printed there.
Once again a child I wander
'Mid the flowers, thoughtless, free
Dreaming not that life has sorrows
And a crown of thorns for me.

Once again I gather daisies
In the sunlight 'neath the hedge,
And my brother gets me lilies
Clinging to the risky ledge.
Clinging with one hand and reaching
Just to show how brave was he,
How he'd risk his boyish ringlets
Getting lily cups for me.

Once again I fish with pin hook
Bent and baited by his hand.
Toss my line with exultation
Throw my prize upon the sand.
Then, my childish heart nigh broken
By its writhing and its pain,
Weeping at his smiling — put it
In the meadow brook again.

O, the blessed hours of childhood
How they throng about me,
Tho' the snow lies on my tresses
And the wrinkles on my brow.
Tho' my brother lieth sleeping
'Neath the daisies' rosy snow,
And we wept his going from us
In the morning long ago.

Father, mother, sister, brother,
In the shadowy land of sleep
Once again I meet and love you
And with you my vigils keep.
From the happy hours of childhood
Coming back — the merry hours
Make me in my pleasant vision
Child again amid the flowers.

March 12, 1866.

ASKING ALMS

I have stood before a picture
Which an artist hand had wrought
Such perfection that it needed
Scarce the perfecting of thought.
I have seen a marble statue
Seeming scarce to need the prayer
He of old sent up to Venus
Since the life was truly there.

But to-day I saw a picture
Which has moved my heart and brain
Tho' 'twas but a little maiden
Standing in the driving rain,
With a ragged gown of cotton
Clinging to her shivering form,
And a hat whose torn fragments
Could not shield her from the storm.

So the child stood in the shadow
Of a dingy chilly wall,
Asking alms of all who passed her
Giving back a smile to all.
Singing sometimes, clearly, sweetly,
As her thanks a sweet refrain,
Careless of the weather, singing
As a bird sings in the rain.

From the torn and dripping hat rim
Rippled golden waves of hair,
As thought sunbeams from the tempest
Had securely hidden there.
And from 'neath her heavy lashes
Large blue eyes were raised to mine
Full of innocent endurance
And a holiness divine.

Ah, you frame your noble pictures
In your frames of shining gold,
But you let this living picture
Shiver in the rain and cold.
O Pygmalion, weep no longer
That old wailing song of old
Lest this statue now warm, living,
Like your marble shall be cold.

Lest the eyes shall lose their beauty,
And the swiftly fleeting breath,
And the golden waves of ringlets
Shall be frozen all by death.
But pray rather to kind Heaven,
With uplifted heart and palms,
That the gracious Christ shall cherish
This pure infant, asking alms.

May 6, 1866.

DEAD AND GONE

Dead and gone, dead and gone,
The solemn bell is tolling,
Passing on, passing on
The funeral dirge is rolling.
Mortal, think, on the brink
Of the coming woe,
You must drink — though you shrink —
Of death's cup you know.

Dead and gone, dead and gone,
Comes that bell of warning
By the moan in its tone
Turning joy to mourning.
Sadder lore than before
Reads it to us ever,
Like the roar on the shore
Of death's turbid river.

June, 1866.

THE KINGDOM UNDER THE SEA

I think till my head grows dizzy with thought
Of the Kingdom under the Sea,
And vaguely I wonder, but never decide
What kind of a place it might be.
Can it be there's another world like this
With the dark blue waves for a sky,
And deep in the hearts of the coral caves
Are there beings like you and I?

Have they from the sinning of Adam been free
So they know not humanity's bane,
Nor Sacrifice dying, on shivering tree
To restore perfect blessings again?
Have their brows never bent to the weight of a sin,
Nor their hearts shrunk away from the right,
Or have they the nature of downfallen men,
As well as the blossom, the blight?

Or is it the summer resort of the Gods,
And have they pearl palaces there
Where Neptune and suite may sit at their board,
And Hebes their jewelled cups bear?
Do the mer-maidens gather their beautiful locks
In fillets of pearl, seeded o'er,
And float through the liquid blue streets of their town
The same as the maidens on shore?

Do they race with the dolphin and laugh at the fish
In lovely sweet silvery tones;
Do they flirt with the men of the Sea, and enjoy
Their jealous complainings and groans?
Do they gather the sea-weed to twine in their hair
And make them anemone crowns,
And woman-like, catching their hearts in the snare,
Reward their devotions with frowns?

Do the mer-men to please them take argonaut shells
And make of them miniature sails,
Or driven by tempests beneath the rough wave
Do they capture the violet snails?
Do they build up their palace of coral and shell
Till the sunshine above strikes the dome,
Do they carpet with jewels and curtain with mist,
And have they the comforts of home?

And do they talk politics under the Sea,
Or have they no choice of a king;
And when they have weddings (they surely must wed)
Do they marry with Rector and ring?
And when the brave sailor-boys crowd to the deck
To look at the Sea in a glow,
Have not the mer-men caught medusas, and formed
A torch-light procession below?

Oh, marvels untold and wonders unsung
Of the Kingdom under the Sea,
Who will brave Neptune and bear back the news
And tell it to you and to me?
Are the mer-men, real men, Oh, tell me who can!
Are the maidens so treacherously fair,
Do they rest on the rocks as the sailors report
And comb out their waving green hair?

Do they sing 'trancing songs in the still summer night
When the moon in the heavens ride high,
And woo on the sailors by face and by voice
To seek their enchantments — and die?
And when our great Cable dropped in their sky
Did they curl their bright hair in its bands,
And then, lest the lightning should shiver their clouds,
Did they snap it with mischievous hands?

Do they have any wonder when ships cross the sea
Or alas! when they sink to the caves,
Do they gather around the dead forms, which have come

To the Ocean to find but their graves?
And filled with a wonder, and awe-struck surprise,
Do they touch the cold strangers' stiff hands
And lift up the ivory lids of their eyes
To show them the coral-reefed strands?

Do the mer-maidens robe them in innocent glee
And try on the bracelets and rings,
The dresses and jewels from over the Sea,
Which the ship to the coral reef brings?
Or frightened by sight of a monster so rare,
And of beings so icy and stark,
Do they shiver and shudder in terrible fear
And guard it with sea-dog and shark?

Oh, mightiest work of an Almighty hand,
Oh, wonders and marvels untold,
Who will go down to this unexplored land,
And all its strange stories unfold?
When the last trump shall sound, and the sea give its dead,
His hand shall its wonders reveal;
When He shall throw open the Sapphire gates
And shatter the Amethyst seal.

When the sound of His voice shall go down to the deep,
And the hosts shall arise at His call,
Oh, then, when they all awaken who sleep
We, trusting in Him, shall know all.

May 25, 1866.

Published in *Godey's Ladies' Book*.

QUERIES

Do you think if I'd a baby,
That I'd let him pull my hair?
Do you think I'd put on collars
Just for him to soil and tear?

THE OLD SCRAP BOOK

Do you think I'd call him pretty,
When he bites his little toe?
Yet I've known some silly mothers,
With their babies, do just so.

Do you think I'd set him crying,
Just to see his cunning frown?
Do you think I'd set him walking,
Just to see him tumble down?
Would I call my baby pretty,
When he'd neither teeth nor hair?
Yet I've known some silly mothers,
With their babies, think they are.

Would I buy him drum and rattles,
Just to hear him make a crash?
Would I watch him most delighted
Break my mirror all to smash?
Would I smother him in flannels,
Just because his voice was low?
Dose him up with belladonna?
Silly mothers treat them so.

Would I think his brow Byronic,
Just because it was so bare?
And his head Napoleonic
In its shape — though minus hair?
Could I trace the marks of genius
In the eyebrows, arched and low?
Yet I've known some silly mothers,
With their babies, think just so.

Would I think my baby destined
To become a man of men,
And to govern and control them
By the might of sword or pen?
I dare say these noisy babies
Play the very deuce — I know.

And I've seen the wisest women,
With their babies, think just so.

Come to think of it, the writer of the above stinging verses can't be a bachelor either. They have a sound of feminine vivacity which assures us that "Ernest Bell" must be a lady; nor are we the less pleased with them for that. May she visit our clubroom frequently.

For the *New York Mercury*. March 31, 1866.

BUD-MAKING

I am trying to make a bud again
Of this velvet-petaled rose,
Which I hold in my hand press so close
But the petals refuse to close.
Alas, the purple-red lips have felt
The burning kiss of the sun,
And the beautiful bud cannot return
When the rose has once been blown.

O Sol, you should make your love to the stars,
Or say tender things to the moon,
But I really think that a god like you
Should let a rose bud alone.
You have stolen the dew from its fresh, young heart
With your passionate kiss to-day,
And I cannot make of the rose again
The bud you lured away.

The *Peninsular Courier*, Ann Arbor, May 3, 1866.

CHÉRIE'S KISS

Chérie, do you love me?
Answer, yes or no.
Are you sure you love me?
Will you tell me so?
Ah, you need not flutter,
I shall hold you here,

Till you tell me, birdie,
Do you love me, dear ?

Sweet are summer blossoms —
Bright are summer birds;
Brighter are your rose-lips,
Sweeter are your words.
Do you love me, Chérie ?
Nay, you shall not go
Till you answer truly —
Is it yes or no ?

Then my Chérie, smiling
Archly in my face,
Presses down my eye-lids
With a pretty grace —
Bridges o'er the darkness
With a warm, soft, snow
Like to nothing earthly
But her hands, I know.

And was it but the fragrance
Of a passing breeze
Laden with the incense
Of the orange trees;
Was it but the pressure
Of a falling flower
On my lips ? — or, think you —
In that quiet bower —
That beneath the orange,
'Twas not flower, nor breeze,
But my darling's rose-lips,
Underneath the trees ?

Ah, the hands are vanished.
And I dimly see
That my Chérie left me
Swiftly, silently.

But I see her garments
And I hear her feet,
Falling on the gravel:
Oh, my dear — my sweet!

In your arms, acacias,
Keep the secret well,
And your mischief breezes
Cannot try to tell
Half the thrilling pleasure,
Half the fragrant bliss
Which was wafted to me
In my darling's kiss.

In the touch so dainty
That I could not tell
Whether 'twas her rose-lips
Or a leaf which fell;
In a touch so fragrant
That I thought the breeze
Wafted to me incense
From the orange trees.

Ann Arbor, May 10, 1866.

MAKING READY FOR OUR JOURNEY

If I promise now to journey
With you, dearest, side by side,
You, your jealousy must bury,
I, my pettishness and pride;
You must put your angry passions
In the grave as well, my dear,
I will give my vain ambition
And the yearnings of a year.

We will bury all together,
Make the grass an emerald door;

Lock them up with chains of daisies,
Keep them locked forever more.
For the rest, to love and patience,
And a Father's tender hand
We will trust, and so my dearest,
Journey to the better land.

December 6, 1866.

TO KITTIE

Do you love me, Kittie Bartell,
As you did ten years ago?
Do you love me, little Kittie?
You were younger then, you know.
Ay, and you were gayer, Kittie,
Blyther than any bee,
Sweeter voice than woodland-singer,
Though it still is sweet to me.

Little Kittie, you have loved me,
In the years ago, my sweet,
When I thought the clover freshened
'Neath the touch of your quick feet.
You have loved me, I repeat it,
In a kind of happy strain,
As one loves to hear old music,
Which he once has loved, again.

You have loved me, pretty Kittie,
Do you know how those words thrill,
How my heart, lest it should hush them,
Stops its beating and is still?
Do you love me now, my darling,
Just as well as you did then?
Did you love me then, my darling?
And I'll ask the first again.

We have lost our romance, Kittie,
Years will take it off, you know,
Just as surely as the sunshine
Robs the flowers of their snow.
But the fragrance, little Kittie,
Never leaves the fading rose,
Only gets the sweeter, darling,
As the flower older grows.

So our love shall grow the sweeter
In the happy coming years,
And we will in their dear sunshine
Quite forget our griefs and fears.
You a widowed wife, my Kittie,
Ay, and children, mother, too,
Leave for aye your life's sad darkness
For the sunshine offered you.

Poor young widow — sorrow's chalice
You have drained with bitter tears;
And my heart was aching, Kittie,
To be with you all those years.
But you know that we were foolish,
Ah, me! let the past be past!
We have come into the sunshine,
And to happiness at last.

A curiosity among men appears — one who is content with one love in ten years. Why, there is time in that period to use up half a dozen loves, and to be left a widower with grown children several times.

September 22, 1866.

LINES ON THE DEATH OF FANNIE SEWARD

DEDICATED TO HER FATHER

Fanny Seward — angel daughter,
Speak her name with bated breath,
You who loved her, you who taught her,
Know the mournfulness of death.

THE OLD SCRAP BOOK

She who was so sweet and tender,
Yet has cost you bitter tears,
In that God could only lend her
Unto you a few short years.

Can you comprehend the story
Tho' your lips its truth repeat,
That an angel, now in glory,
Knelt an infant at your feet?
Up to things beyond her reaching
You have lifted her you know.
Now you listen to her teaching —
She so high and you so low.

Vain your prayers, and your caressing,
Silken chords, they could not hold
Her pure spirit upward pressing
Though you wrought them many fold;
Tho' she loved you, tho' she offered
Her sweet life in your defense,
Yet she must accept the proffered
Out-stretched hand of God.

Did you dream that she, your baby
Whom you stooped to, bye-and-bye
Would out-grow her father, may-be,
In the twinkling of an eye?
In a twinkling, she ascending,
As you watched with quick drawn breath,
Left you, scarcely comprehending
Half the mystery of death.

Left you standing, sadly gazing
To the far-off shining shore
Where are saints and angels, praising
Christ the Lord, for ever more.
Tho' the cross is heavy, bear it
For the Comforter he brings,
Binding up your bruised spirit
With the healing of his wings.

O'er the river that can never
Be re-crossed, the angel barque
Bore her from us, do not shiver,
To her soul it was not dark ;
On the shining shore she lingers,
Looking backward with a smile
Beckons you with loving fingers,
You will follow after while.

Father, bending 'neath the burden
Of a long day's toil and heat,
Even now the waves of Jordan
Coolly lave your weary feet.
Tho' men honor, tho' men love you,
Such poor gifts no healing are,
Lift your eyes up, look above you
There behold your morning star.

For the *Courier* and the *Visitant*,
Ann Arbor, Dec. 6, 1866.

TRIP LIGHTLY

Trip lightly over trouble,
Trip lightly over wrong,
We only make grief double
By dwelling on it long.
Why clasp woe's hand so tightly ?
Why sigh o'er blossoms dead ?
Why cling to forms unsightly ?
Why not seek joy instead ?

Trip lightly over sorrow,
Though all the day is dark,
The sun may shine to-morrow,
And gaily sing the lark ;
Fair hopes have not departed,
Though roses may have fled ;
Then never be downhearted,
But look for joy instead.

Trip lightly over sadness,
Stand not to rail at doom ;
We've pearls to string of gladness,
On this side of the tomb ;
Whilst stars are nightly shining,
And the Heaven overhead,
Encourage not repining,
But look for joy instead.

City Times, Zanesville, Ohio.

February 21, 1867.

SOMEBODY'S DARLING

Flutter of ribbons and glamour of lace,
Innocent sweetness of beautiful face,
Flashing of jewels and brightness of eye
Tell me that somebody's darling goes by.
Somebody, thinking the red of her lips
The richest of rubies can never eclipse ;
Somebody loving, who knows how to prize
More than rare diamonds the flash of her eyes.

Somebody loves her — Oh, Somebody loves
The light of her smile, the flash of her eye ;
By flutter of ribbon and glamour of lace,
Somebody's darling I know passeth by.

Poorest of garments and baskets of lace,
Life-wearied sadness and death-shadowed face,
Want of all jewels and dimness of eye,
Tell me that nobody's darling goes by.
Nobody, seeing the white of her lips ;
Nobody, fearing the coming eclipse,
When Death sets his seal on the brow of his prize,
And shuts out forever the light from her eyes.

Nobody loves her — Oh, Nobody loves
The light of her smile, the flash of her eye ;
By poorest of garments and burdens of lace,
Nobody's darling I know passeth by.

Oh, by the light on her innocent face,
A visible sign of an inward grace;
Oh, by the softening smile in her eyes,
Breaking in light though the shadow there lies —
Surely I'm thinking that somebody knows
The life which has shadowed her face with its woes;
Somebody, loving, who lightens the care
Of the burden too heavy for her to bear.
Somebody loves her, oh, Somebody loves
The light of her smile, the glance of her eye;
By a beautiful peace on the death-shadowed face,
The darling of God I know passeth by.

Godey's Lady's Book, February, 1867.

ANN ARBOR

Emerald bending of shadowy hills,
Linking green garlands around it,
Tenderest drooping of golden-fringed clouds,
Bluest skies,— these have bound it —
These, and the silver-white ribbon which slips
With scarcely a thrill through the grasses,
These, and the sunshine which lingers, and dips
In flowery cups as it passes.

As one sang of England — God's finger has touched,
When he molded this vale, never pressing;
O'er the brim of the valleys the hills overflow
In billows of verdure, expressing;
And here in the greenness our colleges stand,
The pride of the West — our light burning —
Which leadeth our heroes to rule in the land
By force of mind and learning.

Men, stronger of sight than their fellows, have seen
At most through a glass; but still, seeing
Some tithe of the wonders an Almighty mind
Conceived, and controlled into being;

And here, in the wide college halls, they have set
 The proofs of their daring researches,
 From the photographed moon and orbits of stars,
 To the scales of salmon and perches.

Here Nydia stands — the perfection of art —
 Attesting the height of man's power ;
 Perfect in art — not more faulty, in truth,
 Than the whorl of a shell, or a flower.
 It moveth us strangely, a statue, no more
 The soul in 't forever upraising,
 Death wrought into life in the passionless stone
 Too natural far for the praising.

Ann Arbor has more than her bowers to boast,
 And more than her silver-tongued river,
 Soft in the sunshine, and sweet in the rain,
 God bless her ever and ever.
 O city of colleges, pleasant retreat
 From the heat and the burden of day,
 May your pathway to science be cool to the feet,
 Of the travelers who throng on the way.

Peninsular Courier, Ann Arbor, June 14, 1867.

TO C——

In the midst of darkness,
 In the midst of grief,
 Still, oh still remaineth
 Sure and safe relief.
 Still, oh still dear C——
 Shines the sun to-day
 Though the clouds are lowering --
 Cold, and chill and gray.

Over all One guideth
 You and me, our way

He can make most peaceful.
Softly, low, I pray;
Father, Father keep us
'Neath thy shadowing wing,
To thy simple children
Peace and comfort bring.
In our hours of darkness
Guide us to the light.
Father, Savior, help us,
Guide us to the right.

Father, Savior, hear us pray
Ere we seek our rest —
Thy will be done — not ours —
Thou knowest surely best.

February 17, 1868.

A VALENTINE

On a dark and dreary evening when the winds blew cold and
chill, when the side walks were ice-coated, and the gas
burned faint and dim,
Thro' the gloom and thro' the darkness, struggling forward,
slipping back, yet again essaying progress for no weather
daunted him,
On that night so dark and dreary, on that night so cold and
bleak, one, whom I wot of, with his great umbrella armed
Dared the darkness, dared the raining, dared the slipping and
the blowing, roughed his boots and set out bravely still
undaunted, unalarmed.

And he heard the shrill policeman, heard the dread policeman's
whistle; heard the whistling and the calling, but his heart
was brave and strong yet;
Said he, "I will hurry onward, I will walk a little faster for
the rain is beating sorely, and the way is very long yet."
So he hurried, so he hastened and his feet were none too solid on
the side walk cold and icy, but he stood on slippery places

With the ease of one accustomed, with the storm in all its phases,
called the furies who assailed him with their whirlwinds
“gentle graces.”

Called the wind “most pleasant zephyr,” and the rain a sweet
spring shower, called the North wind “sweetest Wabon,”
praised the beauty of the hour.

So he toiled and travelled onward 'til he reached his destina-
tion, and his weary boots were rested by this man of might
and power.

Rested, while he laughed and chattered, telling o'er his great
adventures, all his perils on the journey, and his dangers,
one by one,

And I listened to his stories, to his terrible recitals, to his dan-
gers and distresses, 'til the dreadful tale was done.

Then we talked, this Hiawatha out in search of strange adven-
tures and your very humble author, talked of valentines
and writing.

Said he, laughing, “I will give you so much money in a ‘green-
back,’ for a yard of any poem, which must be of your indit-
ing,

And the poem it shall rhyme well, shall have sense and shall
have measure, and the measure I will have it three feet
long and broad sixteen.

I will have it on next Monday when the clock is striking six, I
will have a yard of poetry with the rhyming all mixed in.

Then I straightway took the challenge, took it with its full
conditions, took his offer as he made it, said I'd do my
very best.

Said I'd give him sense for dollars, said I'd write him such
a poem he would gap and yawn half thro' it, yawn and
dream and sleep the rest.

For he meant the measure linear, I poetic feet employ, so I
wrote it with the measure poets ever must employ, and I
offer for acceptance full one yard of Valentine.

Offer to you for your wishing, as an answer to your wishing, as
a trial for your patience this extensive work of mine.

And I know your patient temper, know your courage and your
bravery by the dangers you encountered as you came along
the way.

By the dangers you passed safely, all the charms and the en-
chantments, all the pretty fascinations of St. Valentine's
day,

But you passed them, bravest warrior, vanquished them in sin-
gle combat, and the hearts with darts transfixed failed to
win you by their wiles.

You, a modern Hiawatha, with the heart of that great Hero,
now must find a Minnehaha whom the conquest shall com-
plete.

St. Valentine's Day, 1868.

"ONLY A WOMAN'S FOOTPRINT"

Only a woman's footprint
Slender and light and small,
Leading down to the river,
Fresh in the snow, that is all.
In the eve, when lamps are lighted,
The first soft flakes came down,
And a chill white frost was over
The hills and vales and town.

Sometime in the night this impress
Was made by a slender shoe;
Out in the dark at midnight,
What should a woman do?
Childishly small, this footprint —
Scarcely more than a child —
Out all alone, and the snow
In desolate drifts was piled.

Down toward the river — how drear
On her must have fallen that night —
Daring her lonely journey
When the stars were scarce alight;

Weary of life and its coldness —
She was but a child, scarcely more —
Did she set with trembling boldness
Her light little feet on the shore?

The cold, cold heavens above her,
The cold, cold drifts below,
With none to shield and love her,
And none to save from woe.
With the swift, dark current wooing,
O pitiless stars, could you light
This pitiful child to her ruin
In the chill and darkness of night?

The gleam of a woman's tresses
Lying upon the sand,
Like glistening golden seaweed
Cast by the waves to land!
The sorrowful, sad appealing,
Of a young and pallid face,
Washed by the waves, and drifted
At last to a resting-place!

Over her eyes the fringes
Droop in beautiful rest,
And two cold hands lie lightly
Over the pulseless breast.
Heaven have mercy — and mortals —
The world was so weary, cold;
God grant this straying lamb has found
Her Savior's tender fold.

June 13, 1868.

THE HEARTH AND HOME

Above may be clouds and thick darkness may hide
My long weary way in its pitiless gloom,
The tempest may lower, but oh, heart so tired,

An angel is standing for aye by thy side
And bids thee remember thy hearth and thy home.

Chorus

Dear faces made bright in the glory,
Dear love made immortal, I come,
Tho' dreary the journey before me,
The star in the east trembling o'er me
Will lead me to hearth and home.

Look up eager eyes in the deepening night;
The rainbow of promise is shining afar,
The hearth stone is shedding its cheeriest light,
The home faces beckon with welcoming bright —
Rise up, lo, He bids thee! — and follow the star.

From sin and temptation, from sorrow and care
Dear voices triumphant ye call me — I come,
My brow is o'er shadowed and frosted my hair,
The child smile is gone which my face used to wear.
Yet still ye will know me — my hearth and my home.

I heed not the darkness for over the way
A light shines for me as I wearily roam,
I know that the angel who taught me to pray
Will lead up my soul to the dawning of day,
And soon I shall be with my dear ones at home.

April 21, 1869.

MEMORIES

How bright is the sun on this beautiful lea
And the breath of the briar-rose is sweetness to me,
They glow with a glory one caught in her hair
In the days long ago when I placed a bud there.
When hand touching hand was delight for a day
And eye meeting eye was a pure ecstasy.

Oh the beautiful hours of that promising day
How blissful the moments, how transient their stay,
Like the bright tinted bow in the cloud of the sky
They gleamed but a moment, in glory to die.
We may say the old pages forever are sealed,
Old bruises we think may as surely be healed,
How is it the sight of this same verdant lea
And the scent of a rose has so brought back to me
The olden old story, and once more is pressed
The penitent's cross to my trembling breast?

Ah, the pages once written can never be white,
And sorrows once suffered will leave us their blight,
The heart's inner chamber oft gives to the day
The sweet, sacred memories treasured away,
A look, or a smile as remembered of yore,
Or even a fragrance may open the door
And for a brief moment we live over again
The joy of our life or we suffer its pain.

The ages may come and the ages may go,
And the waters of death may my soul overflow;
But out from its darkness, a star in the gloom,
Unquenched and unquenchable e'en by the tomb;
Still, still, and forever that smile I shall see
A light in the window of Heaven for me,
And now in the fall of the evening there glows
The faint setting sun on the breast of the rose.

1869

LOVE'S HALO

One night, oh, well remembered night
Through stained glass, and opened door
The moonlight fell upon the floor
In flickering shadows, wan and white.

We stood within the pallid glow
And said good night — good night again

With half of pleasure, half of pain,
And then — and then he turned to go.

But going turned — half unaware
And let his hand fall on my brow
So lightly, yet it thrills me now
As if it still were resting there.

The short, light curls his hand upraised
With tender motion — half caress
Most gentle in its tenderness,
He spake no word — and yet he praised.

There was no need of any word —
I comprehended all he meant,
For mute lips are most eloquent,
The sweetest songs are never heard.

And ever since upon my brow
A tender halo seems to rest.
I must be better than the best
To lift me to his loving now.

Jan. 29, 1869.

POEMS WRITTEN IN LATER LIFE

THE WINDS

The winds were all abroad last night,
They rocked us in our bed,
And sang a fearful lullaby
That filled our souls with dread.

Like frightened children in the dark
Afraid to sleep we lay,
And listened to that dreadful hymn
Till dawning of the day.

The imploring trees reached out their arms
Already chilled and bare
In vain — they cracked, were bent and torn
And carried through the air.

The very cattle on the hills
All shook and lowed with fright,
From what wild cave — in angry mood
Came up the winds to-night?

“Where it listeth,” whence or whither
Thou canst never tell,
Run the words — but He, the Giver,
Knoweth, therefore all is well.

The sunshine and the storm alike
Are scattered from His hand,
Who is the shadow of a rock
Within a weary land.

A very present help, a shield.
Blow winds — and welcome storm —
Since sent by Him — we're sheltered by
The strength of His right arm.

Dec. 5, 1873.

TURN, MY DARLING

Turn, my darling, smile and bless me
Who was wont to smile on thee,
Low I bend me, and confess me,
At my own pure infant's knee.

Little hands that I, upholding,
Taught their pretty clasp of prayer
Now have grown in their unfolding
Strong enough mine own to bear.

Little knees I taught to bending
Kneel before the throne to-day,
And the voice with angels' blending
Is the voice I taught to pray.

Now the soft loose curls are lying
On the pillow as they were
When my darling slept to dying
Slipping Heavenward like a prayer.

January, 1873.

DEDICATED TO THE HOME GUARDS

Guards of home we gladly meet you
With the olive branch of peace;
In prosperity we greet you
Hoping it may never cease;
But we know these hands we're clasping
Should the time of danger come
Will not be less quick in grasping
Weapons that shall guard their home.

Now to-day our guests, God bless you,
 And to-morrow who shall say
 Whither friend or foe may press you,
 This to do, or that to stay
 Whether fields be green or gory,
 Or in peace or war you come —
 Our pride in peace — in war our glory
 Always welcome, Guards of Home.

July 3, 1873.

THE OLD YEAR

Adown the dark heavens there trembles a star,
 Which late in the zenith had shown afar:
 But now through its own glowing pathway it flies,
 Trembles and vanishes — in darkness it dies.

So this bright year which we hailed with acclaim,
 Christened so gayly with such a bright name,
 Shone in the zenith in glory: but now
 Trembles and vanishes, who shall say how.

Blessed old year — though your shining be o'er,
 Your youth and your glory return never more
 Still, still with a grateful remembrance we'll drink
 To you, still gentle guardian; fill up and drink to the brink.

And may your successor prove only as true,
 As faithful and honest as we have found you,
 We cannot forget you, for with you, we know
 We've sorrowed and suffered — had weal and had woe.

And woven with every smile and each tear
 Are memories of you — poor, dying old year.
 The pages once written can never be white,
 And sorrows once suffered will leave us their blight.

The heart's inner chamber oft gives to the day
 The sweet sacred memories treasured away,

A look or a smile as remembered of yore,
Or even a fragrance may open the door.

And for a brief moment we live o'er again
The joys of the year, we suffer its pain
You have blessed us, old year, in plentiful store
No dreadful disaster has come to us — more —.

The white dove of peace hovers over the land
The centennial is coming — old fellow your hand —
May the lad in the long clothes, unknown and untried,
Be a faithful follower of him who has died.

But very young infants are doubtful at best,
We only can hope this, and trust for the rest.
How slowly you leave us, oh, blessed old year
Here's a kind hand at parting and many a tear.

1875.

OUR LITTLE ANGEL

We have a child whose little feet
Can never go astray,
Whose hand will need no parent's clasp
To guide it in the way.
Dear little feet which knew but rest;
Sweet life scarce told by hours
Wee little hands upon the breast
And clasped by burial flowers.

They only saw — those dear dark eyes —
A father's tender face,
Then softly closed — and paradise
Dawned on them in its place.
Tell me, oh dewy eyes, wilt know
That face again — when he
Ascending to thy higher sphere
Gains immortality?

THE OLD SCRAP BOOK

Dear little babe, so sadly missed,
 Altho' was scarce possessed —
 How vacant seems the little crib
 How empty now the breast
 On which we only dreamed he slept
 So swiftly passed his breath.

Dear little lamb, his tender feet
 Were saved the weary way.
 He knew the early dawn of morn
 But not the heat of day,
 This weakling of our flock — the Lord
 Has taken to his breast,
 And in the Shepherd's bosom fold
 Our little lamb's at rest.

Written on the death of little Alfred, June 18, 1876.

GOOD NIGHT

O little brown head nestled low mid the flowers
 O wee little hands clasped so tight;
 God's precious new angel which might have been ours
 Good night, little darling, good night!

Dear, wee little feet never tired nor worn,
 Pure, pure, little soul sinless white:
 Christ's own little angel and ours newly-born,
 Good night, little darling, good night!

June 23, 1876.

"BE NOT YE TROUBLED"

Why are you troubled — the day is at hand:
 Look for the clouds though stars intervene.
 The billows ride high; but yonder's the land
 And over the waters, the meadows are green.

Why are you troubled, O heart weary one
Think of the blessings the future may bring,
Back of the clouds still rideth the sun
And under the snow is the thrill of the spring.

Be not ye troubled, the Savior of men
Blessing hath blessed you, and God's on his throne
And the rose of this promise shall blossom again
When by the still waters He leadeth you on.

MAGDALENE

Upon the step a woman stood
Ragged and soiled and cold;
A woman lost to womanhood
And yet in years not old.
She begged but for her body's need
Some clothes and food to eat,
And as she spoke her downcast eyes
Were cast upon her feet.

Poor weary feet — how long astray
Or why they went God knows;
Because they went — turn not away
He cared for such as those.
Draw thou not back — oh, I beseech
Do *thou* not cast the stone
Lest drifting far beyond thy reach
This soul condemns thine own.

"You seem quite well," the hearer said,
"Why don't you work?"—"You see"—
The woman lifted up her head—
"No one would hire me."
The voice was full of quiet scorn
And deep humility.
What sisters in the land were born
To care for such as she?

She turned and slowly went her way
To deeper woe and sin,
Because no sister hand that day
Took hers and led her in
Away from all that she had known
And back to purity.
Another hand took up the stone
To cast at such as she.

And yet, upon the sand, one day
No word of blame was penned;
But "Sin no more and go thy way,"
He said — the sinner's Friend.
And women sisters of this land
Will He not look to you
To hold out such a helping hand
As He was wont to do?

July 1, 1876.

AILSINORE

Gaily dawns the silver day,
The singing lark soars high;
But my sad heart is cold and gray
Like the depths of a winter sky.
For I stand alone on Time's bleak shore
And I dream of the golden days,
When hand in hand with Ailsinore
We went our pleasant ways.

Then tho' the lark sings clear and loud,
And tho' the sky's without a cloud,
My sun of life is in the west,
My singing birds have gone to rest.
For I'm alone, and never more
Upon this side of Time's dark stream
Shall I behold my Ailsinore
Save as the glory of a dream.

I sit and sigh
As the days go by
Alone on a foreign shore,
And ever I dream of the moonlight gleam
Of the eyes of Ailsinore.
But my heart goes back to the silver days
When I stood with Ailsinore,
And I see again her tender ways
My Queen from the Southern shore.

GRADUATING SONG

For The Silver Wedding of Alma Mater

Alma Mater! Alma Mater! this glorious day
With heart and song we repeat
Good wishes and greetings, tho' now passed away,
The time when we sat at thy feet,
Tho' life has taught lessons we learned not of thee
When sorrow and cares were unknown;
Still, as to the sweetest of flowers, the bee,
So turn we again to our own.

Alma Mater! Alma Mater! long life and success
Crown thee on this fair wedding day,
Tho' silver's beginning to brighten each tress
And thy fresh youth is passing away,
Still, still, in our hearts and ever to be
Unchanged and unchanging for aye,
Enshrined in affection, a fair memory
Too dear to grow old or to die.

June, 1876.

ON THE DEATH OF MR. LEGGET

Speak softly, tread lightly, he lieth at rest,
His beard like a snow wreath over his breast;
So pleasant his smile, so gracious his face
We linger awhile loath to leave him a space.

For why should we grieve? Only this and no more
The bow of his boat has reached the far shore,
And we who still sail on in darkness and woe
Miss the light of his presence, his spirit's fine glow.
For him life was kindly and Death soothed his touch
As one does with a child one has humored o'er much,
How generous, how gentle, how kindly was he
To those whom he loved — only we
Who knew him the longest can value him best,
This heart of pure gold which lieth at rest.

MY WISH TO-NIGHT

If I could have my wish to-night
And put these cares away,
These many, wearing, precious cares
That fret me day by day,
Could I turn back from all the dross
And all the gold of life,
That form the crown and forge the cross
Of motherhood and wife?

Here grief and joy go hand in hand,
And both speed swiftly on,
Sunshine and shadow — there's a land
Which lieth in the sun.
Nor sun nor shade, nor grief nor joy
Can make my life more blessed;
But only this, the smile of Him
Who giveth to us "rest."

How sweet the word to tired ears,
Dear Father, let me be
Content to bear my joys and cares
At rest — at peace with Thee.
Thou knowest how weak and frail the feet
That press the thorny road,
Thou knowest how faltering the heart
That reaches up to God.

And from thine own humanity
Dear Savior, knowing all
Its weakness and its vanity
How prone to faint and fall,
I need not fear Thy judgment, Lord,
Since Love and Mercy plead,
Shine Thou upon the darkest road
And it is bright indeed.

New Year, 1876.

A KING UNCROWNED

Among us walked a King uncrowned
A nobleman, we know it now
When round his bier the wreaths are wound,
And thousands o'er his ashes bow.
For him the hushed and weeping throng,
The poor, the rich are side by side,
As they shall lie ere very long:
To-day they wept for he has died.

That kingly soul, thrice blessed now,
O mourning wife, look up and smile
See'st not the crown upon his brow
Tho' tears may veil thy sight the while.
The pure in heart — and who so pure
As gently bow beneath the rod —
For surely while the heavens endure
He, pure in heart, shall see his God.

His life was given to duties done,
His place is vacant — let us weep!
His rest is come, his race is won,
“He giveth his beloved sleep.”
Sleep thou, the people's comfort — rest,
Thy life has rounded to its close
Thy new life's dawning may be guessed —
For him no longer pain or woes.

O radiant spirit upward soar
Into the clearer air of Heaven ;
The Lord has claimed his own once more
His choicest jewel lent — not given.
O tender spirit, earthward bend,
Of mourning wife, and babes, and friends
With thy celestial sympathy.

Detroit, March, 1883.

THE SPARROW'S COMPLAINT

I wish, said the sparrow, my nest was made
Of just one single feather,
This flying about in sun and in shade,
And carrying of sticks and of strings I'm afraid
Will wear me out altogether.

And I wish that my birds were born with wings.
What good are these eggs I wonder ?
They're easy to break, the brittle things,
Or boys will reach them with ropes and strings
Or else they're killed by the thunder.

And I wish that cats would never grow
But stay kittens forever and ever ;
That big fat worms would lie in a row
Where I could get all I want, you know,
Without any special endeavor.

The sun in the east rose golden and round,
Whilst the poor little bird was repining.
Said she, I must work while the dew's on the ground,
Or never a worm will be lying around
And it's time my children were dining.

May 11, 1886. T. B. S.

SONG FOR THE G. A. R.

Skies are bright and hearts at rest
Soft the breeze blows from the South,
Little birds have built their nests
In the dreadful cannon's mouth.
Once again the drum and fife
Greet again our eager listening ears,
O'er again we live the strife
Buried 'neath the bloom of years.

Chorus

Hurrah! Hurrah for our boys in blue
As they come with eager feet,
And the tramp, tramp, tramp is sounding now
As they march along the street.
Hurrah! Hurrah! for the boys in blue
Hurrah for God and the Right!
The pulse of life beats strong and true
And dawn has crowned the night.

Faces scarred by shot and shell,
Feet that ran at Duty's cry,
Hands that held the sabre well,
Flags that saw our heroes die;
Heroes all, both friend and brother
Clasping hands the Blue and Gray,
Children of our common Mother
Friends more steadfast from to-day.

Chorus.

Bend your heads, your colors furled,
Soft your voices, slow your tread
Some have reached another world
Who beside you fought and bled.

Gone, have they, through Heaven's portals
 They have reached the further shore,
 And have joined the Brave Immortals
 Soldiers, heroes ever more.

June 22, 1891.

SLUMBER SONG ON THE ST. CLAIR

For the *Republican*

Sleep, sleep while billows creep
 Over the slumbrous sands,
 And every breeze
 Blesses the trees
 With trembling, shadowy hands.

Birds in their nests with heads in their breasts
 Murmur a lullaby,
 And the bright river gleams in its silver dreams
 Under the stars of the sky.

Sleep, sleep, thy Father will keep
 Thee in his tenderest care,
 Until the pale dawn
 Of the rose-flushed morn
 Wakes thee to praise and to prayer.

May 28, 1894.

MARGARET

Angels, have you seen my baby?
 She has left this shore to-day
 In her snowy scallop; maybe
 She has sailed into your bay;
 You will know her by the flowers
 Heaped within her tiny boat;
 Scattered over her in showers
 When she left this port, afloat.

You will know her, Angels fairest,
By the broad and lovely brow,
By the sweet lips, palest, rarest,
Smiling softly. Even now
I can see her dreaming, dreaming,
Angels brightest, still of you;
Did she see your pinions gleaming
In the distance? — Would I knew.

She was such a tiny creature
That we feared to let her go
Where no human arms could reach her:
Yet the dear Lord willed it so.
Thro' the darkness, drifting, drifting
From our land of pain and care
Toward the Heavenly shore, uplifting
Golden banks to guide her there.

Angels, have you seen my baby?
Flash some message back to me,
When I know she's landed, may-be
I can trust her then with thee.
Thro' some star the brighter beaming
Thy sweet comfort, oh, impart,
Through some lily's whiteness gleaming
Bear a message to my heart.

For The *St. Clair Republican*, May 28, 1894.

UNDER THE IVY

Under the ivy, lying so still,
With quiet hands folded, feeling no thrill
Of the tense life that burned him — no will
Guiding his actions or ruling his ways;
No longer an impulse to do or to dare,
Only to slumber, as he lies there
Under the sunshine so warm and so fair,
These fancifully fleeting golden days.

What, then, is life which passes away,
And what is this death, the autumn's decay.
When Death conquers Life, and night conquers day,
And living, or dying, we scarcely can tell.
Is he asleep? That intelligent soul,
Who struggled so hard to run his goal,
And held all his powers beneath his control,
To aid in the race, now finished so well?

Under the ivy! Vain quest; no reply
Comes to our questions. God's beautiful sky
Bends to us gently, and fairy leaves fly
Over our feet, where lowly he lies.
Under the ivy, in silence and peace,
Enwrapped in God's mercy, which never can cease,
Until that fair morning shall glow and increase
In the glorious dawning of which he shall rise.

November, 1900.

OUT IN THAT UNKNOWN COUNTRY

Out in that unknown country
Whither you drifted, my dear,
When the woods were brown and the leaves were down,
And the meadows brown and sere.

Out in the land which nobody knows
Where they say are no pains nor tears,
Where angel's feet press the golden street,
You have been four weary years.

Away from this land of shadows and sun,
Away from its love and care,
Oh, tell me, dear, are you happy as here
Where we lovingly bore our share?

Over there away from our life each day
With never a kiss or caress,

Does the heavenly joy have no alloy
And the blessings always bless?

Oh, whisper it low, and they never will know,
Are there times in that endless day
When you yearn for the smile which blessed you erstwhile
Before you had wandered away?

And the touch of a hand in that beautiful land,
Can they give you the love that I gave,
Don't you miss the old love in your heaven above
And long to return from your grave?

August 29, 1904.

TOLSTOI IS DEAD

Tolstoi is dead.
Above his head
We'll heap the drifting snow,
And o'er his bed the wild winds blow.
The passers by will never know
Tolstoi is dead.

Tolstoi is dead
When that is said,
It voices all of Russia's woe.
The poor man's friend — of vice the foe.
Among the dead his head lies low
Tolstoi is dead.

Tolstoi is dead
Yet on his head
The victor's crown should now be placed.
Here lies the man who gladly faced
The direst need — who rank effaced
To aid his kind.

August 20, 1910.

BESIDE HER MOTHER'S KNEE

The rose white dawn that flushed the morn
Has passed away, the noon
So swift to enfold its banners gold
Has furled them now, the moon
Is rising high in the evening sky,
The stars I dimly see
And such a shade is o'er the maid
Who sat at Mother's knee.

Once more in dreams I sew my seams,
Once more her voice I hear
With kindness fraught as when she taught
So patiently and dear.
Thro' all the Years, and all my tears
Her face I still can see
As when she smiled upon the child
Who sat at Mother's knee.

My hair is gray, the passing day
Is in its gloaming now,
Bright youth has fled, high hopes are dead
And sorrow crowns my brow.
I would not sigh as they pass by
If only I might be
Once more the child who sat and smiled
Beside her Mother's knee.

January, 1911.

THE FLOWER GIRL

Little pleader, battered hat crown
With the golden fleece
That would tempt a Jason
Shining through the crease.
Blue, blue eyes uplifted
Sweeter than her posies,

Red, ripe lips half parted
Redder than her roses.

"Buy, oh buy," she's pleading

In the flute-like tones,

"But a penny, see the vi'lets

"All the earliest ones."

The childish voice rings sweetly

Thro' the crowded street,

It fades away completely

And lies a meadow sweet.

The passers see the daisies

That in fence corners grow,

And all the shady places

Their boyhood used to know,

They pause with eyes grown misty

Which are not used to tears,

The violets and the daisies

Have blotted out sad years.

And still the childish crying

"Please buy my flowers, please,"

And men not used to buying

Pause here to purchase these.

Again among the flowers

In happy youth they roam,

And spend the coming hours

Care free, age free at home.

February 11, 1911.

THE NEW WOMAN

Oh, where's the new woman? I've hunted in vain

This beautiful summer weather,

On foot, on car, on steamer and train

For the billycock hat and the miniature cane;

The collar and tie and the manly mien

They seem to have vanished together.

The bicycle skirt, the leggins, the stride,
And the hat with its one stiff feather,
The stiff shirtwaist and sundry beside
All seem to have vanished together.

Or who is this being of frills and of lace
And tresses so fluffy and golden,
With innocent sweetness of beautiful face,
And sweet girlish ways full of maidenly grace.

Oh, back she has come with her ribbons and laces,
This beautiful maiden — to stay.
The awful New Woman she gently effaces
With picturesque hat and gentlest of faces,
Girlish attire and daintiest graces,
God bless her — The Girl of To-day.

TO REVEREND AND MRS. S.

May your sun be often shining
And gently fall the dew:
Your clouds have silver lining
And love be strong and true.
With a smile for every trouble
And for every wrong a laugh,
So your pleasures will be double
And your grief will be but half.

September 7, 1912.

DEDICATED TO THE OLD HORSE

The snow's on the ground and ice in the street,
The air is so cold and so thin,
There is no grass for your frozen feet,
And the oats are gone out of the bin.

But live, horse! live, horse! the winter will pass;
The robin will sing on the tree,
And out in the pastures the tender green grass
Will spring up in plenty for thee.

Your barn is so cold and so lonely, I know,
With never a friend around,
But horses, I know, are out in the snow
Where shelter is not to be found.

Live, horse! live, horse! the spring time is near,
And soon will the cold winter go.
Birds will be singing and tender grass springing
For thee — little horse — from the snow.

March 4, 1912.

HOUSEWIFE'S GUIDE

If a hen is old and tough
Her spurs are hard, her scales are rough,
Her bill is stiff, you cannot bend her,
Leave her for one more young and tender,
With little spurs, comb smooth and thin;
Scales glossy smooth, claws will bend in,
Comb thin and smooth, soft tender bill,
Buy her, fry her, and eat your fill.

A turkey hen when she is old
Has scales so rough, claws long and bold,
Long tuft or beard — a young one shows
No beard, smooth legs and tender toes.
A tender goose has smooth soft legs,
Bend back the wing — the skin will break,
And legs are smooth — the goose you'll take.

And as for ducks the same rule goes,
Smooth legs, soft skin and tender toes
A pigeon when its legs are red,
And down all dead is no use dead.

WRITTEN FOR C. D. P.

"How do you do," said Mrs. Cat,
Bowing very low!
"I'm very well," said Mr. Rat
"You see I'm fine and plump and fat,
But now I've got to go."

"Stay, stay and talk," cried Mrs. Cat
"You see, I love you so."
"I know you do," said Mr. Rat,
"You'd love to eat me up I know.
Good-by, I've got to go."

Little Miss Piggie sat in her sty,
And wished for an opera hat
And Master Pig was passing by
And stopped for a little chat.

"Under the acorn tree," said he,
"The nuts are large and good,
Come on and help me eat them up."
Said Pig, "I wish I could."

THE BLUE IRIS

There's a blue iris not badly done
On the papered wall of my cozy room,
And as I sit in the early dawn
What memories rush into bloom.
The delicate blue of its fragile face
Shines up from the brooklet's bank,
At the base of the hill — the very place
Where golden rod grew rank.

And once again an untrained child
I roam those emerald hills and vales,

I chase the lambkin, myself more wild,
And float my tiny sails.
I fish in the little brook and weep
Because my treasures die,
When I took the bottle to make them keep
And hang on a branch up high.

O blue-eyed iris, in your face I see
The spring at the foot of the hill
So clear and limpid — the striped love grass
And maiden hair growing there still.
The old gourd chained from which we drank,
The milk house — log built — near —
With pebbly bottom — the great crocks sank
In its water running clear.

The plum trees down in the hollow bloom
And cover the hills with snow,
As the blossoms fall — and now there is room
For the fruitage crimson glow.
Over the hill on a rocky ledge
Great pine trees grow, I stand again
Alone and awed on the precipice' edge
And listen to their summer rain.

Again I see the red bird flit
From branch to branch a scarlet flame
And hear him whistle loud and clear
The iris brings these memories back.
Of childhood vanished for many a year.

TO A FLY FOUND DEAD IN A SUGAR BOWL.

Tired little feet upgathered
Rainbow-tinted wings upcurled,
Which were wont to aid thy journey
Little Buzzer 'round the world.
Captive here in sweetest prison
Quite hemmed in by treasures sweet,

Did your eyes in triumph glisten
And your heart responsive beat?

Standing on the edge — looking down
Seeing sugar far beneath,
Did you think those golden granules
Worth to you the price of death?
Did you see in it — Elysian
Great reward for doing, Fly —
And encouraged by the vision
Seek the goal to do or die —

Never — never more to flutter
On your iris-tinted wings;
Little feet in death are gathered
Now have ceased their journeyings.
Life for you has been the fleetest
You have tasted it — completest
And the verdict which is metest
Died of all that's sweetest.

Little type of mortal striving
After pleasures manifold,
Seeking — seeking — never giving
Bartering life itself for gold;
Note the insect struggling, dying
And the goal within its reach.
Learn the lesson — man applying
Which this little fly can teach.

February 6, 1911.

THE CLOVER AND I

Down in the meadow the clover and I
Used in the shimmering shadows to lie.
If the sun went up or the sun went down
The clover and I, we cared not a crown,

For the bee would hum and the lark would soar,
And the grasshopper chirp at his emerald door
As we drank to the full life's meadow lore,
The clover and I.

Down in the meadow the clover and I
Learned of the breezes to mournfully sigh,
The beautiful head of the clover grew brown
And my own as white as the thistle's crown,
And bees sought out the fairer flowers,
And the chill rains beat our emerald bowers,
And all was waste which once was ours,
And life a sigh!

Down in the meadow the violet sprang
And caught in her chalice the fragrance of song,
Where golden gay dandelions lighted the grass,
And the wood sorrel lifted its rosy glass.
Down in the meadow the clover and I
In the long bright days would coolly lie
And smile at the clouds as wafting by
They shadowed us.

Down in the meadow there came one day
A reaper, who carried my darling away.
And never again was the sky so bright,
The clover so red or the daisy so white
For a cloud had fallen that would not pass,
An invisible chill has shrivelled the grass.
And alone in the meadow I linger at last
Quite eager to go.

SOMEWHERE

Somewhere in her bower of beauty
With eyes as blue as the sea,
The wonderful maid of my dreaming
Is waiting and watching for me.

She comes with the gold in her tresses,
 And her fairy like dancing feet,
 With the smile of the spring she caresses,
 I know her, my sweet, my sweet!

1914.

A PLEA

Only a poor old man
 Asking a home, nothing more,
 Adrift in an alien sea
 Wrecked on your friendly shore.
 Once he was young and brave
 And his life loomed large and free,
 But now there seems but a grave
 Waiting for such as he.

Only a poor old man
 Praying for daily bread,
 Asking of you some little space
 To rest his gray old head.
 Homeless and feeble and poor,
 Adrift on an alien sea,
 Brought by the tide to your friendly shore,
 Help for humanity!

San Francisco, 1913.

TO THE ALUMNI OF B. F. A.

Fifty years! and in the seeming
 Scarce a decade can have passed;
 But tonight I fall to dreaming,
 Once again I see the gleaming
 Of that time too fair to last.

Back again to girlhood's pleasures
 And those early friends of mine;

All the heart of woman treasures
All the joy, that dear time measures
Blessed days of Auld Lang Syne!

How many of you are gathered around the Board to-night?
How many have passed into that silent land of which we have
no data? I do not know. To you assembled at this table I
send greeting. We are still girls together. What matter if
the hair is gray? What matter if the step is inelastic? and

“Care and sorrow and childbirth pain
Have left their trace on heart and brain,”

for to-night — only to-night — let us be girls together; let us
once more run the gauntlet of (supposed) tyrant teachers and
smuggle oranges and eggs (tabooed) into the cottage; let us
jump over the traces to-night, though most of us have learned
long since to trot meekly enough, in double harness; let us for-
get life as it is and for one brief hour enjoy life as it was.

O Girls! Let's!

We are tired of care, let's rest; we are weary of its duties,
let's forget them; of its fashions, let's ignore them. No hobble-
skirt shall hobble us tonight. No militant suffragist shall throw
a bomb. Nobody shall remember the “burning questions” of
the day. Wireless shall not exist. The telephone shall be dis-
connected. No automobile shall toot a horn. To-night — only
to-night is our's; and though I may not be with you in body, in
heart and memory I am there; and to the Alumni of the never
forgotten and always dear old school I send greeting.

TILLIE BRADSHAW SWALES.

May 27, 1913.

PAIN

We walked together, Pain and I,
For many a long and weary year;
“Oh, leave me, Pain,” I oft would cry,
And he would just as oft reply,
“Not till you hold me dear.”

And now 'tis so — for well I know
 He is God's teacher here below.
 We're comrades now, and walking so
 The Master draweth near.

January 30, 1914.

SPRING SONG

Dedicated to the Detroit *Free Press*

"The wind's in the south, and the wind's in the west!"
 Oh, this is the story I hear,
 The robins have come — poor little red breast,
 And the dandelion's gold can easy be guessed
 Thro' the leaves and the muck of last year.
 For spring's in the air, and blue gleams the sky
 And his heart is aglow with hope,
 So he sings and he whistles a melody
 As he fumbles with book, rod, and fly
 And he gets out the towing rope.
 The wind's in the north, and the wind's in the east,
 The dust blows a cloud in my eyes:
 But the author of "Spring" may easy be Guest,
 The happy-go-lucky poet and pest,
 Who cares not a groat if he lies.
 My coat's buttoned tight, fur cap on my head
 In spite of the stories I hear,
 All the robins red, must be frozen dead
 And the dandelions never have lifted a head,
 To whisper that spring is near.

1914.

PARTRIDGE SONG

The woods are alight with the stars of the night,
 The flowers of spring 'neath my feet,
 And the grand old trees are kissed by the breeze
 Oh, come to me, Sweet, sweet, sweet!

You are waiting, I know, where the wild roses blow,
You are waiting and listening for me,
And I'm longing for you, and I'm calling for you,
As I drum on the old hollow tree.

The sweet spring is here and the blood runs warm
In beast, in bird, and in tree,
And under the ferns where the columbine burns
My love lies in ambush for me.

1914.

CHRISTMAS DAY

Oh, somewhere out in the land of love
There's a light in the window for me,
As bright as the moon that's shining above
As tall as the tallest tree.
Shine on, shine on, oh, light of love,
Tho' I am so far away
I'm coming, I'm coming, to find my love
For this is Christmas Day.

The candles are lighted, the tree is aglow,
And the hearts are leal and true.
Dear heart, cheer up, tho' your light burn low
There's a light in the window for you.
Shine on, shine on, O beautiful light,
I'm coming, I'm on my way.
Though rough the path and dark the night,
For this is Christmas Day.

O beautiful light that shines from afar
And calls me, I'm on my way.
It leads my heart like Bethlehem's star
For this is Christmas Day.

THE MYSTERY OF THE DAWN

Between the dark and the daylight
The earth is very still,
And mists rise up so silver white
Over each hamlet and hill.
They rise, they march like sheeted ghosts
And none may say them nay,
Rank on rank, and hosts on hosts
They pass their silent way.

Up from the valley and over the hill
These silent cohorts go,
Whence they come — so strong and still
Who can say, and who may know.
Then in the east a shaft of light
Pink as the heart of a shell;
Golden now where once 'twas white
And the clouds come under the spell.

The sheeted ghosts seem royal guests
Clad in white, and purple, and fawn.
Silently they march to the west,
The mystery of the dawn.
With colors furled in full retreat
They rise o'er the shadowy lake,
And then the dawn and the daylight meet
And all the world is awake.

December 13, 1915.

FOR ME

I

The russet and gold of the mountain,
The silver and blue of the sea;
The rose-white dawn of the morning
Are painted in glory for me.

The stars in the midnight are shining;
The flowers abloom on the lea;
The rollicking birds in the branches,
All — all are created for me.

Then sing, oh, my soul, and be joyful,
Oh, cheerily, cheerily sing,
Come join the gay birds in their chorus
To welcome the coming of Spring.

2.

Somewhere in her bower of beauty,
With eyes as blue as the sea
The wonderful maid of my dreaming
Is waiting and watching for me.
She comes with the gold in her tresses,
Her brow like the foam of the sea;
With the smile of the Spring she caresses
And she is the maid for me.

Then sing, oh, my soul, and be joyful,
Oh, cheerily, cheerily sing;
Come join the gay birds in their chorus
To welcome the coming of Spring.

March, 1915.

TO "VEE" WITH A PAIR OF SLIPPERS

These are for the sweetest Baby
With the very sweetest eyes;
Maybe they will fit — and maybe
Santa didn't know the size.

For you see there are so many
Little feet that he must shoe,
That you needn't wonder any
If he didn't quite fit you.

Xmas, 1915.

HOW QUIET ARE THE WORKS OF GOD

How silently the full orb'd moon
Fulfills her appointed round,
The bright eyed stars arise and shine
In silence most profound.
And the green grasses wave in time
Where silent graves are made,
Above the spot which may be mine
When I to sleep am laid.

Little birds in little nests,
Little babes on mothers' breasts
Finding there most precious rests
Free from care and all life's quests,
For the birds all skies are blue,
For the babes all love is true.
Ah! if only I and you
So could trust as life we view.

January 25, 1916.

MY YOUTH'S FAREWELL

My youth, my youth with the shining hair
And the clear bright eye, the dancing feet;
When all the days were passing fair,
And all of life was good and sweet.
Together we've wandered amid the flowers
And danced through the sunny maze,
For faith and truth and love were ours,
And all the days were golden days.

My youth, my youth, come with me rejoice,
For the day is young and bright and gay,
But back on the breeze came his laughing voice,
"I've lingered too long, no longer I'll stay"

And his tones are thrillingly sweet
“For your step is slow and your head is gray
And youth and age can never meet.”

Farewell, dear comrade, of so many years,
As you dance away with your airy tread,
I stand alone. Through a glimmer of tears
I can see the halo around your head.

March 16, 1916, Los Angeles, Cal.

THE MISSION OF PAIN

Through pain a child is born into the world,
Unknowing and unknown is hurled
Into the vortex we call life —
His untried feet are set to tread the path his father trod —
Through storm and sunshine leading up to God.
Through pain the shriven soul has flown
Again into the great unknown,
Upward, still up to the great white throne,
Victorious over pain and strife.

August 28, 1916.

EARLY PROSE WORKS

OUR LANGUAGE

(SCHOOL COMPOSITION)

It has been said that our English Language is not expressive. Linguists speak glowingly of heroic Greek, and majestic Latin whose rolling periods succeed each other in tones not unlike the stately notes of martial music; they revel in the sparkling vivacity of the French and the grand simplicity of the ancient Anglo-Saxon and yet say that the English, a compound of them all, is inexpressive. Surely not. It is a mountain of gems if one will only pause to brush aside the dust of prejudice that conceals them. It is a perfect picture gallery filled with grand, glowing scenes if one will only enter and view.

From out this innumerable collection we may select a few paintings, bring them out into the light and note carefully their beauties.

What a picture does our word *patient* present. A patient woman, and instantly before us arises a fair, sweet face with brown, wavy hair parted softly over a brow where shadows may once have rested, deep, earnest blue eyes which are no strangers to tears, and a sweet faint *patient* smile resting peacefully upon the lips. Such is patience. Such the picture hidden within the studio of one little word.

Again we have the word *holy* — A *holy* Temple — Now is there an awe pervading the “*holy* ground.” A silence that may be felt shadows all. Through the darkened windows steals the softened twilight — solemn music floods the church, swelling and sinking in unison with the emotions of hearts there “gathered together.” Oh, how thrillingly fall the words — “The Lord is in His *holy* Temple,” and there creeps over the heart the solemn, delicious yet awe-ful feeling of the presence of holiness. Surely there is a gem in the heart of that word *holy*.

There are other words equally rich in beauty. These two are not exceptions. How expressive is the word *murmur*, of gushing streamlets and the faint whisper of the wind through the trees, or the busy hum of bees, which one can hear ringing out from the flower bells.

What a hidden picture in the word *sublime*. A picture of dark, lowering clouds, of flashing lightnings, and angry thunders; of the mighty ceaseless voices that are uttered by Niagara "of all that awes and terrifies and yet subdues."

Ah! Latin may be majestic, French may be sparkling, Ancient Anglo full of simplicity, but the English, our own language, is the gallery in which are at once pictures of sparkling waters, and pleasant fields, of scenes that awe one's very soul, and of thoughts that lift the heart from Earth to Heaven.

September 16, 1862.

CORONATIONS

GRADUATION COMPOSITION (HONORABLE MENTION)

"A crown for the victor — a crown of light." In all ages men have chosen crowns for the emblems of honor. Crowns for the prince, crowns for the poet, crowns for all the world deems worthy. It is childhood's expression of love, manhood's of honor. Little children crown their queens with blossoms, men crown their monarchs with jewels. Christmas day in Rome! Came one, a haughty monarch, to worship in the Romish church. All was wealth and splendor. Golden candle-sticks held strangely fragrant tapers that shot up flames to glitter on the fretted ceiling, resounding deep-toned music rolled through the vaulted chapel, garlands of evergreen decked the church, the image of Mary and the Child rose in fair purity from the altar, the priests were performing their mystic rights, the monarch, kneeling with bowed head, on downy cushions at the altar. Then and there by sacred hands was he crowned — "Charlemagne, Emperor of the West." Everything of the crown was a jewel, every jewel shot forth myriad fires. And he, the favorite of the world arose, the haughty forehead shadowed by the

precious garland, arose to hear from every lip of that great multitude joyous congratulations and welcome.

Not a voice was heard which did not ascribe to the new Emperor. Not a knee was there which would not bow to do him homage. And why was he thus honored?

As a king he reigned with a rigid rule. Thousands of his captives, in one short day, were destroyed by his commands. Yet Charlemagne, physically, mentally, and by his coronation in life was superior to them all, in strength a Samson, in intellect a prodigy, in condition a king, the people knew him for master and accepted him. Again, Rome gave a coronal. Not now was the scene at the altar of a splendid church, but at the throne of the Capitol; not now was the honored one a king but a poet; not now a son of wealth but of genius.

A glad procession thronged to the Temple preceded by young nobles bearing garlands of flowers. Princes and nobles surrounded the throne. A senator assumed the exalted seat. "At the voice of a herald Petrarch came," knelt humbly before the throne and received a crown of laurel leaves with the more precious words, "This is the reward of merit." Then the air trembles with the acclamations of the crowd, "Long life to the Capitol and the poet" ring out, and was echoed and re-echoed until the very clouds returned the happy refrain. "This is the reward of merit." For eighteen years had Petrarch striven for the glory of that honor. For eighteen years had he followed the Daphne of fame, and at last, after his weary race, when he would clasp her to his bosom, she "was not," and his arms, like Apollo's, encircled but the rugged trunk of the laurel tree.

He had climbed the tree of ambition and grasped the glowing apples but to find them turned to bitter ashes, for his, a poet's soul, must have felt that half the shouting throng, worshipped only because the nobles did. And this is the bitter-sweet coronation of Intellect.

Again a king was crowned. Not in the church, not in the capitol, but in the "judgment hall" of Jerusalem. Now no solemn music flooded the hall, no choral singing was heard, no fragment tapers were lighted, but, alone, a stranger in His own Kingdom stood the King. No garment glittering with gems and furred with ermine was his, but for a coronation robe "They

took a scarlet robe and put it on him." No crown heavy with its wealth of diamonds, or green with the laurels of glory was placed by consecrated hands upon his head, but "when they had platted a crown of thorns they put it upon his head." No sceptre gave they him but put a reed into his hand. Oh, that the Lord of Heaven and Earth should have had such a coronation! Oh, that his crown should be of thorns, his sceptre a reed, his robe a robe of mockery. Exulting cries burst indeed from the multitude, cries of derision, "Hail, King of the Jews," and "they took the reed and smote him on the head." And this was the coronation of the Friend of man, the "Holy one of Israel." Man could bow with suppliant knee to the powerful "Emperor of the West," could shout exulting praise to the poet Laureate of Italy; but to Christ the "Prince of Peace" he could give but scornful mockery.

And so it is from age to age. To physical strength, to wealth and position man is ever ready to extend the eager idolatry, the crown and the sceptre of jewels. To a superior intellect he bows, as heathens do to stars, feeling that they are infinitely above him and worthy of adoration. To the king in intellect he offers a transient "In Memoriam" on the fickle tablets of his heart, a crown of fading leaves emblematic of short lived glory, *and this is all*. But to the "Pure in Heart," to those "who are in the world and yet not of the world" he has naught to offer but thorns and reeds and mockery, naught but a shameful cross of suffering. Greater heroes than the world ever crowned are daily in our paths. Their names are not mentioned in honor, their brows have never borne the precious weight of a victor's coronal, yet forgiving the rest, in life, wearing patiently its crown of thorns, drinking cheerfully its cup of gall:

"Though the trembling lips may shrink
White with anguish as they drink,
And the forehead sweat with pain
Drops of blood like purple rain."

Only the few in the little world of home think them worthy, and One other who in the future shall crown them "with glory and with honor."

He who goes nobly forth to battle for his country and for

glory, is brave, but the one who stills his eager heart that fain would follow the glorious course of his country's emblem because stern duty holds him with his rigid chain — is he not braver?

His is not the battle of a day but the battle of a lifetime, one constant struggle to stifle longings for the world's approbation, and to win Heaven's, And the World!

It crowns the one with glory and with jewels, the other with dishonor and thorns. The one it honors as a soldier, the other it brands as a coward. That fair woman who stood among the wounded and dying, careless of self, giving all of her care to them until her own frail life was almost sacrificed, was truly noble. The world for once in justice cherishes every syllable of her dear name, but were not those who sent forth the wounded ones in the full glory of manhood, sent them forth with their blessings and prayers, to death — were they not noble?

And yet we hear not of these heroic women, their noble hearts may break with grief, closely the painful thorns may clasp their brow, and that is all their glory. They are in our streets and alleys, in our factories and mills, these thorn crowned heroes and heroines; daughters who give their young lives to labor for younger sisters and helpless guardians, forgetting self in love and duty; sons who yield up life's dearest hopes to guard, with patient tenderness, their parents' pathway for a little time until the angels shall relieve them of their charge.

The good Samaritans who give their last morsel of bread to those they deem more needy. Are they not worthy of a coronation? But does the world ever crown them? Yes, with piercing thorns, with poverty and sneers, or perhaps the cheap boon of pity. But is there no reward for those who tread with bleeding feet the rugged path of duty? for those the world forgets, or if remembers, remembers but with scorn? On the last day each shall be crowned, not with thorns, not with fading leaves, nor yet with gems from the heart of the earth, but with a crown of immortality which "God the righteous judge shall give him at that day." "They too, though sojourning here, shall have their reward. Their coronation shall be in the Audience Chamber of the Eternal Heavens when God who seeth in secret but rewardeth openly shall place crowns upon their brows and palms in

their hands, while an assembled universe from the heights above, and from the depths beneath, and from the wide circle of the distant stars shall respond "Amen."

Zanesville High School.

May 16, 1862.

SERAPHINA FAIRBANKS

This namesake of the angels was born at Lowndes. I cannot tell how she became possessed of her Christian name. Perhaps, in her unfledged childhood, her tender mother may have detected some real or fancied resemblance to the higher powers in the little pink face and half-opened eyes, and in the plentitude of her happiness called her Seraphina. How it was I cannot say, but certain it is that so she was christened. It is due to truth that I confess, when I saw Seraphina, I could trace no likeness to the inhabitants of Heaven; but that may be owing to my notion of the angels being rather queer. This notion was formed in early childhood, and has "grown with my growth and strengthened with my strength"; for even now, I can never think of an angel as other than some cloudy shape clothed in a white dress, with a "crown upon the forehead, and a harp within the hand," and they all stand in a row around the Throne. I do not speak irreverently; I merely assert what is the idea of Heaven and its inhabitants which nine Sabbath scholars out of ten possess.

But, as I said, Seraph didn't look like these. She always wore green, and never had a crown; besides, she was never known to possess a harp, though she did sometimes indulge in a few plaintive strains from a guitar. In summer, a single white rose graced her rather thin hair, which she wore in little short curls; and in winter, a piece of evergreen supplied the place of the rose; for Seraphina was sentimental.

I won't say any more of her resemblance, real or fancied, but will describe her, and you can judge for yourselves.

Seraph was very tall — stately, her mother said; very thin — delicate that same partial judge affirmed; her face was long

and sharp, mouth large, but which, when she laughed, and the thin lips were parted, revealed a fine set of even white teeth — Seraph's only beauty — eyes small, sharp and grey — "vivacious" her mother would have called them, but "prying" would be more true to nature; and the one aim for which she lived was to find some kindred spirit which every one is said to possess. For this, she attended church night and morning; for this, she paid ten dollars for a false braid, used cosmetics, read poems, visited picture-galleries, attended soldier's aid societies — in fact, did every thing else but propose.

Well, leap-year had come, and brought with it Seraphina's thirtieth birthday — "not so old" Seraphina said, "but too old for a single lady"; and, besides, she had found a silver thread lying in bold relief among her dark curls. Poor Seraph sat down and cried — not a stifled sob or two, but a real woman's cry. All the floodgates were opened, and the bitter fountain parted with some of its most bitter drops. That cry eased her heart wonderfully. She arose relieved, bathed her tear-stained face, and descended to the breakfast-room with the firm conviction stamped on brain and heart that something must be done.

"Seraph," said her mother, at the table, "will you pass the butter?"

"Something must be done," answered Seraph, not hearing the question, and not looking up.

"Why, daughter, what must be done? I asked you to pass the butter. What ails you, dear?"

At this, Seraph started, colored, lifted the plate with a trembling hand; and too trembling it proved to be, for the plate fell; and, as a natural consequence, butter, knife, ice, and dish each took its separate way, trying to roll farther and do more damage than its neighbor. This crash aroused Seraph. The tears started, but by dint of biting her lips and clenching her hands she managed to restrain them; and the meal passed off without further accident, though Mrs. Fairbanks affirmed:

"My goodness gracious! Seraphina, you will kill me before the meal is over yet!"

Breakfast dispatched, and the dishes disposed of, Seraphina took off the great check apron, rolled down her sleeves, went

through some mysterious toilet, and finally emerged from the front door, rosy-cheeked and smiling, and took her way to the young doctor's office.

Now, this young doctor, though not wealthy, was in comfortable circumstances, and generally considered a "good catch." He was well known to be fond of practical jokes; and at the identical moment of Seraphina's emergence from her own door, was sitting at the window of his office with two confidential friends. They were smoking and having a fine time generally, when the Doctor spied Seraphina coming toward his office. He had just been talking of the kindness she had manifested frequently toward himself, persistently hanging on his arm at picnics, and keeping him near her at all social gatherings.

"Jove!" he ejaculated, with a prolonged whistle, "here is the angel herself. Now, boys, fun alive! She's had that antiquated cap set for me these two years. There is the bell. Here," opening a door leading to a small room adjoining, "pitch in there. Baize thin — can hear every word. Mind you, keep your mouths shut, and we'll have some fun."

Pell-mell the two friends tumbled in through the open door, which the Doctor closed; then smoothed his face down, and at the time of his visitor's entrance was most diligently studying an intricate passage in anatomy, with the book upside down.

"Good morning, Doctor," she exclaimed, blithely, when ushered into the sanctum, offering her hand. "A beautiful morning, isn't it? I declare this weather makes me feel like a child. I know you'll laugh at me if I tell you, but I was out helping our neighbors' children make a snow man this morning. Dear innocents, it makes my heart glad to see them so happy; and I feel as much a child as any of them, though to-day is my twentieth birthday."

Here a suppressed giggle came from the green baize door; but the Doctor said gravely: "We are almost eaten up here by rats. They squeal dreadfully sometimes."

"Rats!" she responded, "oh, dear! that's bad! I must bring you a piece of toasted cheese and a trap to-night. My, how they act!" as the giggle was heard again, and a slight scuffling. "Ain't you afraid, Doctor Gay? By-the-way, I

said to-day was my birthday. Do you know at twenty years old I begin to feel ancient already, child as I am?"

"I am twenty-five," said the Doctor pleasantly, "and I don't feel old. But what's the matter, Miss Seraphina? Any one sick at your home?"

"Oh, no! I wanted you to examine my teeth; some of them must need attention before this time, surely."

Now, considering that this same set of teeth had been examined regularly every two weeks by the same physician, the examination was quickly finished, teeth pronounced perfect, and the Doctor stood as though awaiting the egress of his visitor.

Still, Seraphina lingered.

"How disordered your books are!" she finally gasped, flushing scarlet. "You need some one to arrange them for you."

"Yes, I know," returned the wicked doctor; "but you never can know how it is, Miss Seraphina, I am alone in the world; none feel enough interest to do it for me, and I do not like to place my books in servants' hands."

Seraph advanced to his chair, and said, timidly yet eagerly:

"I should love dearly to do it for you, dear Doctor Gay. But, seriously, don't you think you would be happier with a — a — wife?"

"Undoubtedly I should," said the Doctor, putting his handkerchief to his mouth; "but, dear Miss Seraphina, I cannot, dare not, hope. I cannot ask her I love, for she is five years younger than I, and I fear has never thought of me. I dare not risk."

Seraphina advanced yet nearer to his chair.

"Why not?" she said, softly. "I am sure that no one could refuse you."

"Do you really think there is hope?" came from the depths of the handkerchief. "O Miss Seraphina, are you sure there is hope for me? Are you not deceiving me?"

"Look in my eyes, dear Edward," returned the angel, taking his hand in both of hers, "and see if I am deceiving you. Do you see any doubt there? O my morning star — my kindred spirit!"

"No, no!" said the Doctor, with lips nobly striving to be calm; "you are goodness itself, Seraphina, but then — but then —"

"But what then, Edward? It is foolish to be so fearful," and Seraph pressed her lips to the hand her left one held.

"So it is — so it is!" said the Doctor. "I will be brave. Will you ask her for me, Seraphina?"

Seraph smiled.

"You are joking, dear Edward. There is no use in asking her now, is there? Oh! let these arms enfold you! I have found you at last, my kindred spirit."

The Doctor evaded the opened arms by grasping one of Seraph's hands and exclaiming with fervor:

"How kind you are! First let me take that rose from your hair and fix your nubia. There, that is right. Miss Seraphina, will you bear my suit to Mary Lee?"

"Mary Lee! O you perfidious man; you wretch, you rascal! Mary Lee! Mary Lee!"

The screams rose higher and shriller, and Seraphina started for the door; but turning suddenly, she met the mischievous faces of the Doctor's friends, who were peering through the torn baize, and heard the uproarious laughter.

"Stop, Miss Seraphina, here's your false hair; it came off when I fixed your nubia!" cried the Doctor after her.

But down the steps flew Seraphina, leaving the false braid in the Doctor's hand, hearing only the shouts of laughter from the Doctor's room. Out into the street — down to her own home — up to her room — slammed the door — and then gave way to tears and anger.

The next morning, a coil of hair was found twined around the bell-knob, and on it this significant couplet, carefully penned:

"When maids embrace, they should be sure
To have their hair pinned on secure!"

Saturday, March 26, 1864.

ALMOST SHIPWRECKED

Grant Holmes, gay, impulsive, fascinating Grant Holmes, was married: and, what was of more consequence, had married from out of his "set"; so said Rumor, so said Truth; and the

“dear five-hundred” speculated and wondered, until their heads ached, as to the probable happiness or misery of the ill-assorted couple. Not that Clara Holman was unworthy the alliance personally — oh no. Everybody declared Clara “well enough,” but then — but then — ah “there was the rub.” Clara was the daughter of a mantua-maker; afar in the distance there was a sad, sad story, that Clara’s blue eyes had not first opened in a palace, nor her first steps taken on velvet, but tottered upon the bare floors of a county-almshouse. Long before she could remember, her mother had become a successful woman, and Clara was reared in elegance — attending the finest schools, and finally emerging from them a bright refined accomplished lady — to be seen, wooed, and won by Grant Holmes. He married her, well knowing all of her story, for she was too honorable to deceive him in the least; and if his proud blood did boil sometimes at the recollection, he only turned the more proudly and truly to his elegant, idolizing wife. Mrs. Grundy might fret and fume, but what cared he.

For two years his wife was, indeed, “his moonlight, starlight, firelight,” his “white rose of all the world.” Then came a change; and this is how it came about:— A second cousin of Grant’s died, leaving an only child, a daughter, homeless, and made it her dying request that Grant should be guardian over the child, and take her to his home, which he accordingly did. Aline Grant was, generally, not even pretty, but she was petite, and had dark, flashing eyes, and glossy brown curls. She was, I said, generally not even pretty, but there were moments when she was more than pretty, when her whole face was alive with feeling, and her eyes gleamed passionately through the bright falling curls, and her full, clear tones rang out in liquid melody. Aline was a fine singer, and a good conversationalist, and a sad flirt. She had been with Grant Holmes not quite a month, when a circumstance occurred which made her forever a bitter enemy to Clara. She had been out walking with Clara, and just as they were going into the front door, on their return, Aline heard a boy, standing near, say to another: “The tall one’s the poor-house bird, but ’tother looks more like it.”

Here, then, was rivalry, between the well-born Aline Grant

and the "poor-house bird," Clara Holman, and Aline's eyes flashed at the degradation. She had not forgiven Clara for her impudence in accepting her cousin, nor for her haughty manners, and she never could. As far as she loved any one she loved Grant Holmes; and now her resolution was formed.

"Are you tired to-night, Grantie?" asked Aline, one evening when he was sitting unusually wearied in the gathering twilight, and she drew a low stool to his feet, and sat down there — her usual seat now — leaning her head upon his knees.

"No, Lena," he answered, letting his hand fall caressingly upon her curls, and linger there, "I am not too tired to talk to you."

"Aren't you, Cozzie. I am so glad. Did I tell you that we were down to the Infirmary to-day, and saw the woman who has been there nearly thirty years. She talked a great deal about those who were born there, and gave us quite an interesting account of their changes of circumstances during that time. What ails you, cousin? you shudder."

"Nothing ails me, Lena; I was slightly chilly, that is all; go on."

"Oh, I've no more to say; but, Grantie, think of being an inmate of that place! Oh, it is dreadful! I don't wonder the person has to bear the stigma through life. Surely no refined man could love a person born in such place!"

Grant Holmes was fearfully proud, and this seed of discontent in his fortune, and contempt for his wife, was skillfully sown, and before he was aware that it had dropped, it was "bringing forth fruit."

Months passed on, and Clara had grown accustomed to being left alone; Aline and her husband rode, walked, and chatted together all the time which could be spared from business. Of course, Clara was invited to join, but the invitation was so plainly complimentary that she invariably refused. She was not suspicious, but proud and sensitive, nor was she deceitful. There was something about Aline that she disliked excessively; and though she was kind and ladylike always, she never caressed her or called her by the thousand diminutives which her husband so lavishly bestowed. They lived in an enduring companionship, and that was all. Now, Aline never left her room

when Grant was absent, and Clara was almost always alone. A great distance had come between those who so loved each other — a cloud which threatened to separate them completely.

One evening, Clara was going to the library, but she paused at the door, shuddered, and turned away. They were sitting upon a tête-à-tête, Grant and Aline, and Aline's brown curls were on his shoulder. Clara saw him bend hastily and kiss her, and the words, "Why, little one, birdie, daisy, you jealous little darling, you know I love you," smote her heart like lead.

"What was that?" asked Aline, starting guiltily at the rustle of Clara's dress.

"Nothing, darling," was the answer, "only the breeze lifting the curtains."

Aline nestled closer to him. "I am safe where you are," she said simply; and then added with an arch look, "You don't love your little Aline."

The eyes, half playful, half earnest, looking up in his face, were perfectly irresistible. Grant stooped suddenly toward her; folded his arms closer about her, and whispered hoarsely, "Love you, no! I idolize you — more than life — more than Heaven, my idol, my idol!"

Her heavy lashes fell to her crimsoning cheeks, and she lay passively in his arms, until he said fiercely:

"Aline Grant, will you fly with me? Will you? Will you go to-night — in an hour from now? You must, you shall."

And Aline said softly:

"If you wish it, Grantie, I will."

And the compact was sealed by sinful words and kisses.

In sinning thus, Grant Holmes was not to blame, perhaps, so much for being false to his wife as for allowing a deep, passionate nature to hurry him on to sin. He was so entirely a creature of impulse that he never stopped to think of the terrible consequences that might accrue from this action. He had but one thought, one desire, and that was — Aline. At heart, Clara was still his love; but she had grown cold and reserved; and it was not to be wondered at that Grant should love the passionate little Lena, at least, for a time, so that he should yield to this impulse of the moment.

They parted, each to make the necessary preparations for

their sinful flight. Grant ran upstairs to his room, gave orders for the carriage to wait at a neighboring corner at midnight, packed his most-needed effects, and sat down to read, taking the first book that presented itself. It chanced to be a volume of Longfellow's poems, which his wife had given him, and on the fly-leaf was written:

"Darling, your life is a poem more perfect than this, because God is the author — a beautiful, perfect poem. Oh, see that you read it well." Grant dropped the book and fell into a dream of the past — of how he had loved Clara, and how she had cared for him — "but," he said, impatiently, "now it was different; Clara had no love for him; she was careless of him." Was she so? He glanced about the room. It was cheerful and bright. His dressing-gown and slippers were arranged for him; fresh flowers were under his picture; and — ah! he remembered now, it was his birthnight — on the stand by his side was a richly embroidered smoking-cap and a volume of poems, his wife's gift. Grant's eyes softened, filled, and he took the cap, reverently kissed it, and replaced it. Then he rose and went to his wife's room. He must see Clara once more before he went, and she would probably be asleep; there was little risk to run. He paused at the door. It was partly open; and in the faint star-light he could see a figure in white, and the faint, broken tones of a prayer reached his ears:

"Father in Heaven, guide and guard him; keep him from evil, O God, and I beseech Thee to 'hold him in the hollow of Thy hand.' It is I who have sinned in worshipping him. Punish me, O God, but be merciful unto us."

Silently, Grant glided in, knelt by that silent figure, put his arm about it, and said in his deep tones:

"O God, be merciful unto us, and bless us."

For a few moments they knelt in silence after Grant's voice had broken the stillness; and then, rising gently, Clara twined her arms about her husband, and said, placing her cheek against his in her touching, childlike way:

"Thank God, for He has restored you to me."

"Yes, darling," was the answer, "and thank you, his angel, who has led me from darkness into light. I will return to you in a moment, my wife."

Leaving a quiet, happy smile on Clara's lips, Grant went to the library, where, as he had promised, he found Aline awaiting him. She sprang forward at his entrance and clasped his arm, but he undid the clinging arms, and said gravely:

"Aline, I have seen the glory of Heaven as Saul saw it, and I will not leave the Angel who will guide me. We must give this up. I do not love you as I do my wife, and this sin must be given up. God help us, Aline, you and me, in our great sin and trial."

"And you are afraid, then," hissed Aline, through clenched teeth. "That moon-faced girl upstairs has been chiding and scolding you, has she? I am proud of you to be governed by a pauper — I am, indeed."

The cutting irony of these words cut Grant to the quick; and Aline's eyes flashed triumphantly, for he at once offered his arm, saying gravely:

"The carriage is at the door; come, Aline."

Quietly they threaded the broad halls and emerged from the door into the clear, calm night-air. A few steps brought them to the carriage. Aline's baggage was already there, and the driver was in his place. Grant opened the door, then paused, saying slowly:

"Aline, will you not return? This is very, very wrong. It is not too late yet. Come back, Aline."

She laughed a short, scornful laugh, and said:

"Coward! I thought you brave enough; do as you wish. Come, I could despise you if I did not love you; but I do. Oh, Grant, I do love you."

There was real feeling in the words; and Grant grew a trifle paler as he unclasped the fingers which wound about his own so persistently; and only God and the angels knew what it cost him to say:

"Then, Aline, good-bye and God bless you. Jim will take you to a friend's house, where you will remain until I can make further provision for you."

"What do you mean, Grant? Are you not going?"

"No, Aline, I am not. My good angel has saved me; but you must go, and may your good angel save you. Once more, good-by."

The carriage drove away, despite Aline's shrill "I won't go! I'll never be duped in this way! I'll kill you all!" And Grant returned quietly to his wife, listened fondly to her loving words, and returned her loving kisses, until she fell asleep with a smile of happiness wreathing her lips.

"I wonder where Aline is," said Clara the next morning at breakfast.

"She has gone to Mr. Bight's," said Grant coolly slicing his potato. "She took a notion to go after you retired, and so I called the carriage for her. I did not think it necessary to wake you before she left."

"Certainly not; but Grant, dear, I dread her return. There is such a cloud between us when she is here."

Grant left his place, went behind Clara, and lifting her face up to him, said:

"Clara, darling, Aline will not return here to live, and there shall never come another cloud between us if I can help it; so help me God!" And it was almost solemnly that his lips met hers after the earnest words.

Years passed on, and Grant Holmes never faltered in his devotion to his wife; and she had no need of pride and reserve; for she was all his world to him.

One day a note was brought to him. It was a formal announcement of Aline's marriage to a banker of the city, and a card to himself bearing the words: "Aline Grant was yours — Aline Lincoln is your enemy."

This latter Grant concealed, and a few months after came the tidings of Aline's death. She was drowned on her wedding-tour, and they said her last despairing cry was:

"Grant! Grant! I wish you'd forgive me! I wish you'd forgive me!"

Clara Holman never knew that her husband was almost shipwrecked; but that he had been turned from the fierce Scylla by the Pilot Prayer, and from the "sinfulness of sin" to the pureness of purity by her own dear, woman's voice.

For the *New York Mercury*, December 24, 1864.

TAKEN PRISONER

I, Clarabell Harding, sat down and cried; I, who did not remember having shed a tear since I had screamed for the moon, and papa had refused it, for the simple and only reason that neither love nor money could buy it, now was crying, screaming, stamping, because of the result of my own waywardness of temper. It was the old oft-repeated story; Charlie Kambell and I had quarrelled, and he, in common with all the lovers of the present day, had enlisted out of pure revenge, and the news had just reached me an hour after the regiment had left the city. Of course, I was frantic. How could I help being, when every little brown curl on his handsome head was dearer than all the world to me? And yet, what was to be done? I knew that he would not desert; and even supposing such a thing possible, if he should, he'd get shot for it. I couldn't prove him under age, for his tall, manly frame and dark mustache laughed at such an idea; nor could I hope that he would be discharged for disability, for a stronger, healthier, handsomer specimen of manhood had never gone "off to the wars." What then? It was a plain case of the non-curable; and yet I was determined in some way or another to cure it. All that long, weary night I sat alone, listening to the soft patter of the rain upon the window-panes, and thinking, planning, rejecting plans, until just as the gray morning broke, a rift in the dark clouds, my heart grew lighter with the certainty that I had a plan at least worthy of the trial. I knew that Charlie's regiment was ordered to Fort ——, and near that place I had an aunt living — a plain, honest woman, loving me dearly for my mother's sake — and whom I could trust in time of need. Accordingly, having procured of all the "needfuls" for a visit, I closed up house, kissed papa an affectionate good-by, and started for a visit to Aunt Jane, papa declaring "that the child was getting rather pale, and a change of air would do her good."

In due time I found myself comfortably domiciled in Aunt Jane's pleasant old homestead, and in a fair way to be spoiled by the immense amount of petting which I received from auntie and her two sons, Sam and George. Uncle Reuben I have not

mentioned because no one else ever did. He was of so little consequence in the family, that I was barely conscious of his existence. Aunt Jane was the head of the family, and Uncle Reuben had been the nurse of the small children; but since they had grown to years of maturity, he was very useful in feeding auntie's poultry. "Good at that," she asserted; "at least better than anything else." As regarded politics, the whole family were, to use an expression more forcible than elegant, "on the fence"; though I really think that at heart Aunt Jane was a "secesh." The boys had just returned from a Northern College, and very wisely kept a respectful distance from Jeff's auxiliaries. Upon these boys depended all my hopes of success, and, being a great favorite, I did not doubt their willingness to aid me. One day, a few weeks after I arrived at Aunt Jane's, I astonished that good lady by appearing before her shorn of my curls. "My goodness, Clarabell! What's up now?" she exclaimed. "Where's your hair, child?" "I cut it off, auntie. "All those beautiful curls your papa was so proud of! I declare it's shameful!" "No, it isn't, auntie. Let me part them to one side — there! Isn't that pretty?"

Aunt Jane's face softened a little. "Pretty, yes you are pretty! You make me think of your dear mother when she was your age, with them little rings clustering over your head." I sat down at Aunt Jane's feet and put my head in her lap, then said, as I felt her hand caressing my forehead:

"You loved my mother, auntie. Don't you love me?"

"Love you, yes; as though you were my own daughter. Why, Bell, I love you every bit as much as I do Sam and George."

"Then, auntie, you don't want me to be miserable, do you?"

"Who's going to make you miserable? Has Sam, or George, or Uncle Reub dared —"

"No, none of them, auntie," I said, gently pushing her back to her seat from which she had started in her vehemence; "sit still, and I'll tell you in a few words: I am engaged." "Humph!" ejaculated Aunt Jane, in a dubious tone. I went on, however: "Engaged to Charlie Kambell, or was, but we had a quarrel the other night, and he had to go and enlist out of sheer ugliness, and leave the city without seeing me. Now,

auntie, Charlie has an old mother who needs him at home. If it hadn't been for her, he would have gone long ago; besides, it is just killing me to have him in danger every minute, and I must get him home again."

"But, my dear, foolish child, there's no way of doing it, that I can see; and I can't see what all this had to do with your cutting off all them curls I like so much."

"Then, I'll tell you auntie; there's one way of getting him home, but it is dangerous, and I shall need you, and Sam, and George, to help me."

"What's the plan, Bell?"

"Auntie, we must take him prisoner, parole him, and send him home; and I have cut off my curls because I intend to be a Confederate officer, at your service."

Auntie began to look mournful. "Poor child! has trouble turned your brain?"

How I laughed; then I stopped and said: "Not a bit of it, auntie. Just listen to my plan, and you will see. I know Charlie well enough to know he'll struggle. He and a comrade or two will go into the neighborhood in search of luxuries which Uncle Sam don't provide. Now, auntie, we are to put on Confederate uniforms (I've a beautiful officer's suit in my trunk), and during one of these excursions, we can easily capture them."

Auntie actually whistled, then she called the boys in, and they declared it was "nonsense," "foolhardiness," etc.; but, finally, both Aunt Jane and the boys were won over to be willing coadjutors in my plot, "solely," they said, "because if I was determined to get killed, they wished to see it." George was sent out as a spy, and Sam was directed to procure suitable uniforms for himself, Aunt Jane, and George. The uniforms were gotten, and week after week slipped by before George could learn anything of Charlie. Finally, however he brought in the cheering intelligence that he had overheard one soldier tell another that he and Kambell were going to have a roast-geese or two for dinner the next day, from Granny Kentwin's place, unless they were all "gobbled up by that time." "So," concluded George, "Miss Harebrains, we'll don our 'secesh' clothes, and see if we can't 'gobble up' a goose or two and send

one man out of this inhuman slaughter, if we do no more good."

Of course, I had too much tact to quarrel with George regarding his sentiments in regard to the war-question at that time. On the contrary, I kissed him, called him a dear good cousin, and flew off to see if my uniform was complete.

The next day — it was Sunday — rose clear and bright. The birds were all a-twitter on every branch; the bees kept up their continual hum of contentment among the flowers; and the pine-crowned mountains bathed their brows in all the glory of the spring-sunshine. It was a Sabbath kept by Nature. The very air seemed redolent of incense offered at the shrine of the Creator. It was with a light heart that I donned my uniform, parted my hair a la officer, stained my face to a healthy brown, darkened my brows by aid of burnt cork, and finally adjusted a dark mustache over my lips.

"I'm afraid those girlish feet will betray you, General," laughed Sam; but when I cased them in boots I had no fear of betrayal, so completely was I metamorphosed. Aunt Jane, with her grizzled gray hair, made the roughest old Rebel I ever saw. She was tall and sinewy, and just suited for the character she assumed.

Our arms were attended to carefully, lest there should be need of them.

It was our intention to surprise and capture, if possible, before our prisoners-expectant could have time to use their arms, for there was no probability of their venturing out unarmed in a country overrun by Rebels; but if that failed, then we were to have recourse to arms, being careful to insure flesh-wounds only.

Our horses were mounted and we started in great glee; followed an unfrequented road for a mile or so, and then George led us off into a gorge completely filled by a growth of shrubs.

Here we dismounted, hid our horses in the thicket, and proceeded to Mrs. Kentwin's house.

The old lady was alone, and being a staunch Rebel, joyfully admitted us, at the same time commiserating us upon our miserable garments (Sam had been compelled to get old suits), and offering us her choicest provisions.

We did not refuse, lest it should awaken her suspicions, and she began preparing dinner for us.

Suddenly we heard steps distinctly upon the gravel walk.

"It's the soldiers," she whispered, quickly and quietly pushing me into the other room; "go in there, all of you; quiet now, and you can nab a couple of the rogues."

She left the door a little ajar, and returned to her work as a tattoo of thundering raps was beaten upon the door.

"Who is it?" questioned the old lady.

"Friends!" was the answer; "and some confounded hungry ones, too. Come, mother, we won't hurt you if you let us in and give us some dinner."

Every word was accompanied by a fierce shake at the door, which bade fair to break it from its hinges. To prevent this, Mother Kentwin opened it, and we heard two pairs of feet stamping upon the floor.

"That's right, mother," said the same voice. "Getting dinner, eh? Glad to see it. Ain't you hungry, Kambell?"

"Yes," was the answer, in the well-remembered voice which had often made my heart leap; "I can do full justice to Mother's goose, I can assure you."

"Come, then; hurry up, old woman," said the first voice; and, applying my eye to the crevice of the door, I saw that Charlie and his comrade had seated themselves upon a bench directly opposite the door at which I stood, and had placed their guns in a corner near by.

No chance there for a surprise but by a sudden rush, and that might endanger one or more lives.

Granny Kentwin seemed to comprehend the dilemma in which we were placed for she put the table in the center of the floor, spread it, and placed chairs for them with their backs to the door at which we stood.

The soldiers seated themselves, and I could have touched Charlie's brown curls by reaching out my hand, so near were we to them. Poor fellows! They were evidently hungry. How they did enjoy that meal; how they laughed and sang, and joked, and told rich stories, until, in the midst of their hilarity, Sam drew me gently back! He and George took the lead, and Auntie and I brought up the rear.

George sprang behind Charlie's comrade, and had no difficulty in pinioning and securing his man; but Charlie heard the step, sprang to his feet,—upsetting the table—and fought so desperately that, had it not been for Auntie's strong sinewy arms assisting him, Sam must have been vanquished and my scheme a failure. As it was, however, Charlie was secured, deprived of his weapons, and placed on the bench beside his comrade.

"Do you surrender?" I inquired, bending my eyes sternly upon them.

"You'd better have asked that before, you thief in the night," roared Charlie's choleric friend. "Ask a pair of bound men if they surrender, you murderous old owl, you."

"Silence there," I commanded sternly. "You know what we do with Old Abe's minions when we want to put them out of the way," and I glanced menacingly at the branches of a nearby tree, "but you seem like good, well-meaning fellows, and I'll give you one chance for your lives. I can only hope that you'll be wise enough to accept it."

"Name it," said Charlie—who had not spoken since his capture—in a low earnest tone.

"You are both Union soldiers?"

"Yes," said Charlie.

"From what state?"

"— Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers."

"Who are you?" shouted Charlie's comrade to me.

"An officer in the Confederate service, as you see," I returned loftily; "and willing to do you a good turn, if you will only do me one."

"What is our chance for life?" asked Charlie, steadily, glancing at his comrade.

"This. We are sadly in want of information; if you will impart all that you can, we will give you freedom; if you refuse, death."

There was a moment of silence. Charlie started, and paled slightly. His companion did not show the least evidence of having heard.

"Do you hear and accept?"

Then his comrade burst out like steam from an overcharged boiler, interspersing oaths very generously:

“Look here, you becurled, be-perfumed puppy of a chivalry —”

Here George made a step forward to restrain him, but I commanded him back and he went on:

“I’m a rough Yankee, never owned a darned nigger in my life, and I reckon, savin’ the fact, that I’ve been as bad as most men; but I never was so confounded sneakin’ as to lie to my mother, or peach on the old flag. If you want this old carcass you can jest take it, fur I’ll never save it on them terms.”

“Nor I,” answered Charlie, firmly; “are there no other terms?”

“None.”

“Then Jim,” turning to his fellow-prisoner, “we shall have to say good-by. If ever by any chance you get home, tell mother that I died true, and I’ll say the same for you if I am spared.”

“General,” suggested Sam, respectfully touching his cap to me, “these seem like honest fellows; it’s likely they’d keep an oath if ’twas to save their lives, and we’ve got that other job on hand to-night. Hang it, I don’t like to string up two unarmed men. I can fight them in a hand-to-hand battle, but I don’t like this work. Let’s parole them?”

“What do you say, comrades?” I asked, turning to George and Aunt.

“String them up, root and branch,” said the latter, in a voice so gruff that it came near upsetting my assumed gravity. “There will be plenty there to knock the Confederacy into a cocked hat!”

“That’s a fact,” emphasized Charlie’s friend again. “For once you told the truth; and for every drop of blood you spill, they’ll take a thousand murdering traitors, that you are.”

“Hush!” said Charlie, in a low tone; “be quiet Jim, you sign your own death-warrant by that kind of talk.”

“Well, I can’t help it,” but he added in a softer tone: “Looky here you old (I mean Mister) Secesh, this chap here has an old mother to home and no one but him to support her; and I’ve a sweetheart that I don’t ’zactly like to leave on such short notice, so that if you’ll give us our parole we’ll take it and keep it; or if you’ll let one off if ’tother dies, why take me,

coz my girl can find some one else to take care of her, but his mother will never find another son."

Charlie turned a grateful glance toward the noble-hearted fellow, but said firmly:

"I will not allow that."

"Come, General, time goes; let's parole them," suggested George, and I yielded. Judge of my surprise when Charlie refused to take the oath; but on being assured that it was that or death; at the solicitations of Jim, he yielded.

The parole was made out (Sam had secured blanks from a Confederate officer whom I suspect was a friend of Aunt Jane's), a solemn oath was administered, both were deprived of their arms, released, and advised to go home. They thanked us for our leniency, Jim remarking by way of compliment:

"That the Rebs were a sight better'n he thought; but he couldn't make out what the deuce they wanted to split the Union for."

After we thanked Mother K., who was highly indignant because we had not hung them, we waited until our prisoners were out of sight, then found our horses and started for home. When once under shelter of Aunt Jane's friendly roof, how we laughed and shouted, and how happy I was!

The following day, I went home and dispatched a letter to Charlie from there, begging him to return. He returned a joyful answer, saying that he had been released on parole and could come home. He did, the dear fellow, and is here yet. Charlie does not know to this day how he was taken prisoner, and I dare not tell him, lest his fine sense of honor would force him to return to the Army. So it is my own little pet secret; and if he ever goes back to the war again, I'll don the Secesh garments and, aided by Aunt Jane, George, and Sam, again take him prisoner.

Saturday, Jan. 14, 1865.

For the *New York Mercury*.

WHAT'S IN A VOICE

"He expressed a wish that he had a daughter to bestow upon my bachelorship. 'Thank you, Sir, I heartily wish you had,' I replied."

The passage was nothing, but as the book fell from my hand, I let it lie, and sank into deep thought; and this was the form my thoughts assumed: Don't they all wish so, every bachelor of them? Did ever a man live who did not in his soul find that wish nestling warm and snug, like the bird's nest in the crevice of a rock, be his heart ever so hard and stern? I don't believe it.

Cigars are fine things; wines, excellent; clubs, of course, divine; freedom, life: but on a rainy night, when the chimney will smoke, and the bachelor has smoked until he begins to feel related to the chimney, and can't for the life of him smoke another cigar; when Tom has gone off with the evening-paper, and the poor bachelor's head aches so he don't want wine, and he can't go to the "club" because of the rain: would he give a fig for his freedom? Eh?

Nay, I'm quite sure he'd give two figs to get rid of it. He can't help thinking such thoughts as these: "Confound the rain! Plague that Tom! Why can't the fellow buy his own papers? What a muss and tumble this room is in; my head aches, and I wish some one would bathe it," and then from the soft garish daylight of reality, down into the soft, hazy twilight of memory, he glides almost imperceptibly to the time when the rainy evenings and aching heads were made happy by sweet voices and velvet palms; and he can feel again the caressing fingers wandering over his brow and tangling themselves softly in his curly hair, as only a mother's hand can; and he can hear again the pleasant flattery: "You have beautiful hair, my son. It is like your father's"; and can feel the warm kisses and see the bright smile that was ever a beacon-light guiding him from great dangers to the "Narrow way." Then cigars, wines, clubs, freedom, were never dreamed of. He did not need them. Nay, he thought he was free, poor ignorant boy!

But all this is gone; gone the velvet palms, the soft kisses, and sweet smiles; gone all: his good embodied in one being—

his mother. But he knows she has only gone "up a little higher," though he never could imagine her "a little lower than the angels," and he is fain to be content.

I think all of this passed through my friend Harry Lush's mind, as he sat in his room on that chill November evening, and the longing filled his heart for a sweet, womanly presence to come to him. He wanted no glitter, no glare, but a soft pearl, a pure opal; no woman of fashion, no woman of mere outward beauty, but a true, womanly woman, as God first made her, as He has made many since; and I really think if such a one had entered those apartments at that hour, she would have been chosen, and Harry Lush answered in the words of the quotation: "Thank you, Sir."

But no such one came, nor indeed any, excepting Bridget, "To see if the ghentleman would be afther wantin' any washin' done"; and the rain beat against the window monotonously until, in sheer desperation, Harry got up, pulled on his heavy boots, put on his oilcloth coat and cap, took his great umbrella, and went out to brave the storm, urged by nothing but a desire for motion and of chasing away ennui.

On he went through street after street, as though walking for a wager until, in turning a corner suddenly, he became aware that there was some slight impediment.

"Hello, there," he shouted, and well he might, for he had come into collision with a lady, and sent her delicate umbrella flying into the gutter.

"Beg your pardon, Ma'am; I'll get it in a moment," he said, courteously giving her his own, and starting after hers; but at that moment a naughty wind seized it and bore it onward, rolling and tumbling but still going further away, and Hal after it, mentally not blessing all umbrellas in general, and this one in particular. Finally, it was stayed by a friendly gaspost at the corner. Now, considering that the umbrella had not "picked its way" at all, but had gone floating and floundering through the muddy waters of the gutter, managing to break a bone or two every turn it made, when Hal picked it up, it was not in the best condition possible; and it must be confessed, the gentleman bore it to its owner, holding it by the extreme tips of his gloves.

"I'm sorry you took the trouble," said the lady, in a clear

pleasant voice that Hal liked. It wasn't silvery, nor soft, nor sweet, nor particularly low, but clear, honest, earnest, as though the owner of it had a soul as clear, and honest, and earnest, as her voice.

"Not a particle of trouble," said Hal; "but," he added, composedly, "I fancy, Madam, you will find the rain less muddy before it comes in contact with this article," tapping the offending umbrella; "and as it is much broken, I propose leaving it here and using mine."

She laughed slightly, and said, "Oh, I couldn't think of it; I've already trespassed too much upon your time; and, besides, what would you do?"

Hal was always cool in an emergency, and he answered by putting the lady's broken umbrella on the sidewalk, and attempting to use his own; but she said, suddenly, and rather as though the words were choked from unwilling lips. "I can't leave it though, as you say, it is broken, for we need it at home."

"Just as well carry it," returned Hal, philosophically, raising it, folding and placing it under his arm, saying, "it is too much injured to be of use; I will see you home, if you will permit."

The lady did not hesitate a moment. She trusted to the voice entirely, for the light was too far from them to distinguish thereby. She took the proffered arm and said, laughing a little: "Certainly, but how do you expect to carry this umbrella with the other one under your arm?"

"I don't expect to," said Hal, laughing. "I'll give it to you for a cane. The handle is clean."

"Now, will you take me to St. Ann street? I know the way," she added, a little suspiciously.

"Glad you do," said Hal; "for I don't. I place myself under your guidance."

"Thank you."

After that, they relapsed into silence — this strange couple, trusting so perfectly in each other's voices. Both were occupied in their own thoughts — the one of the strangeness of her position, the other of the lady by his side; "for a lady she surely was," said Hal, mentally.

He wondered how she looked; and once, when they passed under the light, he hoped for a gratification of his curiosity;

but she turned suddenly to adjust her dress, and the golden opportunity was lost.

"I should not have gone out to-night," said the lady, breaking the silence; "but my friend is sick, and I promised to sit with her. I could not get started from home sooner. Are you not going too far out of your way, Sir?"

"Not out of my way at all," Hal responded — adding, "I have no way but my own. I am 'monarch of all I survey.'"

"Which is precious little at present," laughed the lady, peering forward into the darkness.

After this break, the conversation passed to indifferent topics; and Hal was sorry to hear his companion say:

"Here we are, Sir. I am very much obliged to you, and am very sorry to have troubled you."

She gave him her hand, which he felt was small and soft, though gloved, listened to his protestations that it was no trouble, and he was happy to have met her, then ran up a pair of steps, opened the door, and went in.

Cold and rainy as it was, Hal looked at the house — only a two story frame. There were four or five just like it within a stone's throw. Hal had forgotten or had not heard the direction the lady had given; and now he was in a quandary.

"How the deuce am I to get home!" he ejaculated, half angrily. "I'm in a pretty fix now, I should say."

As a matter of course, it had never entered his head to go up the steps the lady had ascended, ring, and ask her the way; so he wandered up one street and down another — up and down, until finally the brilliantly-lighted windows of a theatre suddenly appeared before him.

"The theatre! good! Now 'Richard's himself again,'" exclaimed Hal. "Now I'm home"—mentally he meant, of course; for, physically speaking, his home was the matter of half a dozen squares from the theatre.

Sturdily threading the streets, he reached his own boarding-house, was admitted, rushed up to his room, stirred the fire vigorously, changed his clothes and finally, at eleven o'clock, found himself comfortable in dressing-gown and slippers, cigar in mouth, and feet, according to the detestable American habit, on the mantel.

So he sat for a few minutes thinking; and then he took his cigar out from his mouth and laughed, got up, and examined his pockets — mentally wondering if she were not examining her pockets to see if she had not been robbed. Nothing was missing, and he resumed his seat, saying:

“George! I wanted to see that girl’s face.”

The next morning, when Harry put away his umbrella, he found a small earring caught in one of the pendants. It had not been fastened in the ear, and had been drawn out by catching in the silk.

He remembered the umbrella catching in her hair. The ring was rare and tasteful — a small diamond set in the cloudy glory of opals. Of the latter stones there were eight of peculiar brilliancy. Hal examined the jewel, then wrote a neat description of it and inserted it in the columns of the *Advertiser*.

Day by day wore on, lessening Harry’s remembrance of his encounter in the rain. Once, in the hope of finding the street, he had gone out searching, but vainly; and now, that spring-sunshine had taken the place of fall rains, he had lost interest in the affair.

No one had called to claim the ring, and it was lying in the drawer.

One day in June, Hal was preparing to call on a friend, when he observed the jewel.

“I’ll marry the girl who had taste enough to select that,” he thought, half smiling, at the absurdity of it. And that voice! What a voice she had! — clear, ringing, decided. That girl is my wife.”

Hal made several calls. The last one was at the house of one of his “old flames,” Ella Reeves — a blue-eyed, light-haired little thing, as innocent as a kitten, and just as sensible. She had a sister, Minna — tall, dark, and stately. Hal didn’t like Minna, and was glad to hear Ella say she was deeply engaged in the other room. Just at that moment, a voice came to them, rather angrily:

“Not finished? My gracious! What a way you have of idling your time! What’s the matter?”

Then a pause; and Minna’s voice again broke the silence.

“How ridiculous! Not well? Look at your cheeks! they’re

as red as roses. Your class are almost always sick, to believe your story."

Then he heard another voice — the clear, ringing, decided voice that he knew so well — not at all the meek accents usual to seamstresses.

"Miss Reeves," it said, "I believe that I remarked that I was not well — I do not allow my assertions to be disbelieved."

Ella laughed a little, held up her pretty finger, and said:

"Be quiet. Minna is blowing up her girl. Let's hear the rest of it."

"Agreed," laughed Harry; for, with a sudden thrill, came the recognition of the voice of the lady whom he had once protected in the rain, and he was anxious to hear how she would endure the trying fault-finding of her haughty mistress.

Minna's voice again reached him, full of indignant surprise:

"Really! You don't! You have quite a temper; but you should not get into passions. Your class cannot afford such luxuries. If I see or hear any more of this, I shall dismiss you immediately. Do you understand me?"

"Certainly," responded a voice, as stinging and as haughty as her own. "You are never difficult to understand. I demand from you the most implicit confidence in my word, and I must have it. As to my class, as you are pleased to term it, allow me to assure you it is far above your own: as I never had a friend so far forget her position as to tyrannize over one she considered her inferior. I wish you a very good morning."

"Oh, Regina, you've such a temper; don't go, I must have that dress finished. I'll give you double if you'll stay! Don't you see to-morrow is the party, and I must have the dress!"

"Don't let me listen," said Ella, at last dimly conscious that playing the eavesdropper was not entirely favorable to her sister; but Harry smiled, lifted his finger to her, quietly and exclaimed:

"Bravo."

Of course, Ella understood the exclamation as applying to her sister, and was satisfied.

Again the voice was heard:

"No, Miss Reeves, I cannot stay; though, of course, double pay would be an inducement to forget an insult."

How bitter the tone was.

"God made me your equal. You shall not make me your inferior." The clear tones ceased, and the door softly closed.

Hal knew she had gone out. Hastily rising, he said:

"I must go now, Miss Ella, I'll be in again this week. Until then, good-by."

And she, with some little playful scoldings on her part, allowed him to leave.

No sooner had the door closed on him, than he looked for the Regina who had so interested him. A figure robed in black was before him, and this he followed; for he thought the graceful, stately carriage well corresponding to the voice, but before he could overtake her, she had entered a small house, and disappeared.

This time, Harry did not forget the street and number, but took it down lightly. Pine St., No. 56, and then went home.

The following afternoon, Harry Lush took the jewel, and his way to Pine Street. He reached the house, and then hesitated. What was her name? Regina he knew, but what more?

"Who lives here?" he inquired of a ragged urchin, perched upon a tree nearby.

"Miss 'Ginie," responded the boy carelessly.

"Who's Miss 'Ginie?" asked Hal, impatiently.

"Why, I reckon she's Miss 'Ginie," returned the boy, grinning. "Least-wise, I never heard as she wasn't."

Hal saw there was no use in appearing angry at the provoking little rogue, so he asked quietly:

"What's her last name?"

"You're a brick! Hang on like a leech! Like to know, wouldn't ye?"

"Certainly," said Hal, "or I shouldn't have asked you."

"I reckoned so," was the cool response, accompanied by three cheers, and a tiger.

"Boy," said Harry, laughing in spite of himself, and showing him a piece of silver (reader, this happened before silver had become merely a memory), "give me a correct answer, and I'll give you this."

"Will — eh? What if I don't want it?"

"Then you can do without it," said Hal, coolly preparing to pocket the piece, and lifting the knocker on the door.

"Wait, then! I'll tell you for the piece!" screamed the lad, scrambling down from his exalted position, and advancing to Hal; but he had trifled too long.

Hal turned to him with a stern "Be off with you, Sir" which he dared not disobey; but his obedience was characteristic of himself. He receded a few steps, stopped, looked at Hal, and then said in a tone of intense admiration:

"Well, you're a brick, Sir — a reg'lar brick — and fit to be a ragamuffin. Lud! how I was sold!"

Then with a hop, skip, and jump, he vanished.

The tap of the old-fashioned knocker was answered by the appearance of an elderly lady, in her heavy satin and soft laces. Singularly out of place she looked, Hal thought, in that little low house.

"Is Miss Regina in?" asked Hal, using the only name he knew.

"I suppose you mean Miss Rawdon?" said the elderly lady inquiringly. "Yes, she is in — come in."

Hal entered a perfect bijou of a parlor, soft velvet carpets, and heavy curtains, rare pictures and ornaments, heavy crimson tassels and reception-chairs. He was astonished.

"I will send Miss Rawdon to you, Sir."

And the lady passed gracefully through the door. A moment passed, and a young lady entered. She was tall, finely formed, with large dark eyes, full red lips, and dark rich braids of hair framed in the face. She wore mourning, and in one ear Hal recognized the mate to the ring which he himself held.

"Just the girl for the name," thought Hal.

She advanced to him gracefully, but wearily, and with an indifferent air that said as plainly as the words could say, "I am weary"; and a red spot on either cheek did not belie the manner. He rose.

"Miss Rawdon does not remember me," he said, in his softly modulated tones.

At the sound of the voice, the lady's eyes lighted up, and she smiled recognition.

"The voice, not the name," she said. "I cannot but remember the voice of the gentleman who took me home in the rain, and wanted me to leave my umbrella on the sidewalk," was

added, with a dash of laughter in eyes and lip. The ice was broken, and Hal said:

"True enough, I had forgotten that extravagance; but I must tell you my errand. I came to restore a trinket that my awkward umbrella carried off that night. I advertised, but no one came to claim the jewel, so I was obliged to find the owner myself."

Miss Rawdon received the jewel with a bright face, and "I thank you so much, Sir; they were a gift from my father before his death, and it pained me to lose one of them; not exactly the jewels," she added with a curve of her proud lip, for a sewing girl to indulge in, "but I promised papa I would always wear them. I am twice your debtor, Mr. Lush."

"I shall try and keep you so," was the smiling return. "I am very fond of having debts to collect."

Just then Mrs. Rawdon appeared.

"Mama," said Regina, "Mr. Lush, whose card you gave me a few moments ago. He called to restore my earring which, you remember, I lost on that rainy night."

"Ah, Mr. Lush, I am glad to see you, Sir. The time was when we should not have cared for that trifle; but times are changed. Still, Regina is a good child, and will not allow her mother to do without the old comforts, though she hasn't these things in her own room at all; but she never was 'a born lady,' to use a common term, for I often tell her she cannot appreciate beautiful and refined surroundings as I can."

Regina's eyes lightened a moment, then softened to moistness at the palpable selfishness of this remark. Hal took his leave, saying lightly:

"I must see that you do not lose that earring again, Miss Rawdon, and, therefore, shall have to watch you."

A week after Hal called again.

"Miss R.," her mother said, "was sick. Regina was a good child, but it made her nervous to sit by her and wait upon her, and Regina was too stubborn to permit a servant to be hired."

Hal understood the "stubbornness" perfectly well, but did not say so. The lady went on:

"Regina was her step-child, but she had been at a great deal

of expense to have her educated; therefore, it was but right that she should be of use to her now. After her father's death, Regina tried to get a school, but failed, and had to descend to dress-making. It was a good thing that Regina was not so refined as to miss the laces, and silks, and jewels she was wont to have, as she (Mrs. Rawdon) should do if she were to be deprived of them. As for the parlor-furniture, that belonged to her, and the creditors could not touch it."

Tired of this selfish harangue, Hal took his leave.

For weeks, Hal went daily to the little wooden house; and daily was Regina gladdened by an offering of flowers or rare prints, and sometimes a little scrap of a note, hoping that she was better, and signed "Hal." After that, she became convalescent; and he still called daily.

"I must go to work, to-morrow," she said, one evening, half sadly, when he was sitting by her.

"To-morrow! why you're not able yet."

"Yes, I am; I must go, for I've an engagement; and mama is complaining bitterly that her oranges are out."

"Mama be —"

He stopped suddenly and then said:

"Well, but, Miss Regina, suppose that I should countermand that engagement as a physician?"

A soft crimson stole up even to the white brow, and she drew her breath a little shorter, but answered lightly:

"Then I shouldn't obey you, Sir. You are not a physician, you know."

"I am in this case, and I do countermand it; but, lest you should regret the loss of the engagement, I offer you another in its place — Regina, my queen, my darling, will you accept this one?"

Hal bent over her chair-arm eagerly; and she, thrilling with deep joy, turned her head from him, but he took the face in both hands, and lifting it to him, gazed for a moment at the quivering mouth and harried eyes, then kissed her lips not lightly, but tenderly; lingeringly, as though he would draw her soul through the crimson portals.

And thus they were betrothed; drawn together by the mere affinity of voice; and years after, when Regina's raven braids

were threaded by silver, and Harry's firm step was faltering a little, he used to pass his hand adown her soft hair, and say laughingly, but tenderly:

"Ah! Regie, if it hadn't been for your voice, I should have been an old bachelor to this day. Just think what you saved me from; and you would have been an old maid soon, and cross, Regie."

"And," Regina would return, "Harry, if it hadn't been for your voice, you'd never have gotten the treasure you did"—with an arch smile—"I'm not sure if you should lose your voice now, but I should desert you, and follow it."

And that's what's in a voice.

Saturday, February 11, 1865.

For the *New York Mercury*.

POOR MAGGIE McLAIN

I will tell you now an "ower true tale," though it must needs be a sad one; for I have just seen a pale, deathly face, singularly devoid of expression, pressed up against my window, heard a tapping on the pane, as the face vanishes; and this face, this tapping, this laughter have recalled to my mind what I shall tell you.

Maggie McLain was the only daughter of Puritanical parents, and had been carefully reared in one of the New England villages, held in by all their forms of stern religion, taught that sin was most fearful and most to be abhorred; and, as a consequence of such an education, at the age of eighteen was as pure and as innocent as she had been at the age of three. Her pure mind could not understand crime. It was too fearfully appalling for contemplation. She was a fair, gentle girl, "thinking no evil," and shadowing all sins in others under her broad, sweet mantle of charity. About this time her mother died, and Maggie was installed house-keeper for her father. She was at once all happiness and misery, for, stern Puritan as he was, he feared that to him she was an idol, and strove jealously to love her less. Then, too, the constant fear that his dove might mate with a hawk was omnipresent. This fear was in a measure enhanced

when William Swaranger (or as Maggie called him, Willie) first became a frequent visitor at the house. He had been a stranger in the village one year before; and, though not one knew anything particularly bad about him, certainly it was a noticeable fact no one ever spoke good. He was brave and handsome, dressed elegantly, drove the first teams in the country, and attended all places of amusements, yet was in no particular business to warrant such heavy expenses. It had been whispered that he gambled; but, when the report was mentioned to him, he laughed his free, hearty laugh, declaring, on his honor, that he could not tell one card from another, and the rumor was set down as false. This Will Swaranger saw Silas McLain's one ewe lamb, and coveted it. He was not a man to covet anything very long without making an effort to obtain it, and, accordingly, he at once became a very devoted and frequent escort of Maggie's, loving her in his better nature, and guarding that love jealously. After all, that was Mr. McLain's one greatest objection to him. And when an officious neighbor informed him that they were betrothed, utterly unbelieving as he was, he determined to end the friendship at once.

"Maggie," he said, "Will Swaranger told me to tell you he'd be around to-night."

A scarlet flush stole over the white cheeks of Maggie, like the faintest flush of sunset on snow; but she only said:

"Very well, father."

Mr. McLain glanced keenly at her, and he noted the tell-tale flush upon her face.

"No, it is not very well," he returned; "I don't like Swaranger, and you know I don't; next thing you'll be wanting to marry him, and I'd see you in your grave sooner. There, girl, don't cry; there's no danger of that I s'pose; only to-night, when Will Swaranger comes, you just tell him that I don't want to see him here again, or anywhere else with you."

"But, father," began Maggie, pleadingly.

Mr. McLain's brows darkened.

"But, father, nothing; I tell you it shall be as I say. Do you mean to be disobedient?"

"No, father, but —"

"Well, then, see that you are not." And to cut the matter

short, he quitted the room, leaving poor Maggie almost heart-broken; for with all the deep tenderness of a woman's heart she loved William Swaranger.

Taught control, it was very few tears she shed before seeing Will in the evening; and with the hopefulness of youth, she felt certain that Willie's superior wisdom must find some way of escape. He came, handsome, fascinating, affectionate, and self-possessed as usual, offering his hand to Mr. McLain, which that gentleman scarcely touched, then to Maggie. As for Mr. McLain, he grasped his hat, pushed his head into it, and left the house.

Maggie and Will were alone, and the former was sorrowfully doing her father's bidding, when there was a rat-tat-tat at the door from brawny knuckles, the latch lifted, and farmer Phillips ushered himself in. He was a neighbor, who resided two miles from the village.

"How d'ye do, Miss Maggie, blooming as ever, in a quiet way?" he asked, cordially pressing her hand. "And — ah, Mr. Swaranger! you here; how d'ye flourish this warm weather?" taking out a red bandanna to wipe the perspiration from his brow.

"Maggie, child, can't you get us a drink?"

Maggie gave him a glass, and after quaffing its contents and returning it to her, he said, in his trusting, cordial way: "Maggie, child, I thought I'd just drop in a moment and let you know of my good fortune — father's out, ain't he?"

"Just gone this moment, Mr. Phillips."

"Well, I don't know as it's much difference; you can tell him as well as not, Maggie, I've sold the old Smith farm at last, and have the one thousand dollars in gold with me," letting his voice sink to a whisper, and not observing Swaranger, who had moved closer to him, "I shall keep it home to-night, and I want you to tell your father to come over early in the morning, and we'll decide what's best to do with it. Come, Maggie, child, congratulate me, and you, too, Swaranger."

"I do most heartily, Sir," said the latter, in his soft tones, offering his hand, which the latter shook heartily.

Maggie only said: "I'm very glad for you, Mr. Phillips."

But eyes and lips encored it, and the farmer pinched her cheeks, declaring she was a "dear Puss."

"Miss Maggie, I have an engagement, and must go," said Swaranger, rising.

"Good evening, Mr. Phillips."

Maggie accompanied him to the door.

"I'll surely see you to-morrow, trust me," he said earnestly; then stooped and kissed her, saying, with unusual feeling: "Whatever becomes of me, Maggie, may the holy Virgin guard you, child, and keep you always pure."

And that prayer has been answered. It was with a light heart that Maggie returned to Mr. Phillips, for had not Willie said that they should meet again to-morrow? and her trust was implicit.

Soon her father came in, and a couple of hours passed in discussion of how to dispose of the gold; and the question was still undecided when Mr. Phillips rose to go.

"I declare," said he, laughing in his jolly way, "so much riches make a coward of me; I'm afraid to go that lonesome road again to-night. McLain, you couldn't spare me Maggie, could you?"

"Certainly, she can go, and I too," was the answer.

"Oh, dear, no; I don't want you, man. Why, I'd never get home at that rate, you'd be for shooting at every shadow on the road. I've got my 'colonel' here, you see, and he'll take care of Maggie and me too (Mr. Phillip's 'colonel' was a very fine revolver). Come my girl, bundle up."

Always gentle and acquiescent, Maggie donned bonnet and shawl, said good night to her father, and started for the wagon in waiting, but, returning slowly, said:

"Won't you kiss me good night, father?"

Surprised at the request, so unusual of Maggie, McLain yet stooped, kissed her and said softly, very tenderly for him:

"Good-night, my child," and she was gone.

It was a very dark night, and once out from the village the road wound through a thick, dark wood for quite a distance, but, perfectly acquainted with it, Mr. Phillips felt no fears.

Gayly chatting to Maggie, and occasionally bursting into snatches of cheerful songs, he drove on.

Maggie, weighed down by the overshadowing of some fearful calamity, she knew not what, scarcely answered his sallies of

wit by monosyllables; and he, seeing that she inclined to silence, let her alone.

Too dark to distinguish objects at the slightest distance, the first intimation Farmer Phillips had of others being on the road beside himself was a sharp crackling of the fallen leaves and twigs, the rearing suddenly of his horse, as it was grasped by the bit and stopped, and a deep voice saying:

“Your money, or you’re a dead man.”

Maggie cowered down in the seat; and he, not forgetting her, even in that moment, put his arm about her, and drew her very close to him.

“Who are you,” he demanded, undaunted, “who dare ask an honest man for his money?”

“That matters not,” was the answer. “Will you give it?”

“No!”

“Then die.”

And a pistol was raised, a bullet whizzed past his head, so close that he felt the air in its wake.

A moment more, and the ‘colonel’ was on duty. With a cool:

“It’s a revolver, Sir.”

Mr. Phillips aimed, fired; and the highwayman who had shot at him, with only a groan, was stretched lifeless in the road.

There had been but two; and the second one, occupied in holding the horse, seemed to have taken no active part in the crime, and now left his charge, broke through the bushes, and fled.

Then Farmer Phillips said to Maggie, drawing her closer, as he would a little child.

“There, my girl, don’t be afraid, I don’t think there’s any more of them, but I’ll just load up the ‘colonel’ again anyhow, and then see to that fellow in the road, though it ain’t often I miss aim when I try to hit. I hope he ain’t dead, for I don’t want the sin of murder on my soul, if he did try to kill me.”

Working diligently all this time in the darkness, the weapon was reloaded, and the farmer sprang out from the wagon and advanced to the prostrate form.

“Maggie,” he called out, “feel in that little box by your side there, and bring me some matches, will you? It’s lucky I brought them, as it’s confounded dark here. Hurry up, Maggie,

there may be life in this fellow though it ain't very likely, since the 'colonel' had a pick at him."

Trembling in every nerve, Maggie grasped the box of matches, climbed down from the wagon, and went to Farmer Phillips, guided by the voice, for she could scarce see him. She gave them to his outstretched palm, and he retained her hand a moment, saying:

"Why, what's the matter, my girl; don't be frightened. The 'colonel' is good for half a dozen fellows like that yet. Your hands are like ice; cheer up, child!"

He released her hand, and struck a match on his boot.

"There," he ejaculated, "that's lit. Why, bless me, if this chap isn't done up in crape. Tear it off his face, Maggie. I'm afeared he's gone to his last account, poor sinner!"

The farmer lighted a dry twig from the match he held, and at it blazed up brilliantly, Maggie's trembling fingers tore off the heavy mask of crape and revealed the death-cold features of — Will Swaranger.

Bending lower, with lips apart and eyes horror-frozen, she examined and reexamined every feature of that handsome face, as Farmer Phillips exclaimed:

"By Heavens, Maggie, I do believe it's Bill Swaranger!"

She broke into a little trill of laughter, which was more frightful than anything that had happened during that eventful night, and fell to kissing the cold face, and patting the white forehead, cooing softly:

"Willie, dear Willie, don't you see Maggie?" laughing occasionally and pressing her hands.

The farmer looked at her a moment, and exclaimed:

"Maggie, Maggie! What's come over you, my poor child? Why, he was at your house to-night"—thinking a moment, and then he said slowly:

"Ah, I see; poor shorn lamb! Heaven help her now. Blamed rascal!"

Mother's voice was not more tender than the rough man as he said, stroking her hair softly:

"Come, my child; we'll go home now. Come, my girl, Maggie. What! Must have him, too? Then we'll take him along. See if you can't carry his head, Maggie."

That much she understood, raised him gently, and the light, athletic form was soon placed in the bed of the wagon, the bleeding staunched by the farmer's red bandanna.

Maggie sat down by it, laughing and cooing, and the farmer took the reins; so that sad, sad group went home, the farmer, never giving a thought to his money, which, however, was not the less safe.

Once at the farmhouse door, Mrs. Phillips bustled out, overflowing with her motherly hospitality, to welcome her pet Maggie, and not heeding the farmer's "Softly, mother, softly!" reached out her arms to embrace the girl, but Maggie, pushing her away, screamed:

"Go away; he did no murder. Willie is here; go way, I say. Willie, dear, Maggie is here with you."

Mrs. Phillips shrank back with:

"Why, father, what is the matter with the girl?" and "Oh, Nathan, who is this poor bleeding creature in the wagon?" as Sam, the boy, appeared on the scene, holding a lantern.

"Do tell me. What am I to do with Maggie, and what ails her? It's all a mystery to me. Do speak, father, quick."

"Can't now, mother. Help me to get this body out, and yon poor dove will follow then. Come, mother; don't stop. Yes, I'm afeared he's gone to his last account.

"Sammy," to the boy, "hold that light a little higher. Now, mother; one lift — that's right," and the poor bleeding body was borne into the house, Maggie following of her own accord, and seating herself by the corpse when it was laid upon the bed.

"No use looking, mother," said the farmer, as his wife was feeling for the heart. "He's dead, but I couldn't help it. The colonel shot truer than I wanted him to that time. You see, mother, as we was comin' home through that strip of woods, Maggie and I, we was attacked by two fellows, who wanted my money. I told you that I got the thousand, and stopped in and told Maggie, and Swaranger was there, didn't I? Well, I refused, and one of them shot at me — there's the hole in my hat, now — so I raised the colonel, and there that one lies," pointing to the bed. "T'other one took to his heels or I'd a peppered him some, too, mother." Lowering his voice, "This

one is Swaranger, Maggie's betrothed, and when she saw his face there in the road it was too much for her, poor lamb! How quiet she sits there! Nay, let her alone. The good Lord'll comfort her more than you or I can. I dread to see her father in the morning, for she's the apple of his eye, and well she might be, poor thing!"

Mrs. Phillips' great motherly heart was full, and, burying her face in her apron, she broke into a real woman's cry, the great sobs shaking her portly person.

Maggie heard her, and, laughing, broke into singing a merry boat-song which Willie had taught her, smoothing his face softly with her hands. So she sat all the long night, and Farmer Phillips and his wife kept her mournful company, longing for the day, and yet dreading the appearance of Maggie's father. But he came at last; and when the sad news was told him, he said nothing, only grew very white, and went to Maggie, lifted her face in his hands and cried:

"Maggie, little Maggie, don't you know me?"

"Willie is dead and gone, now; Willie is dead and gone!" wailed the girl, sadly, wresting her face from his hands.

He put back the great agony which was choking him, and spoke again:

"Maggie, see, dear; it is your father, and he has brought you the maple-leaves you wanted for your book. Look, dear; how pretty they are!" dangling the bunches before her. "Only think, dear. Oh, Maggie, don't look at me so; try and remember."

"I do remember," she said sadly, and a gleam of light crept over the agonized father, only to be lost in deeper gloom as she went on:

"Willie and I love each other, better than any one in the world, I think, and father would rather see me in my grave. How cold your face is, Willie, dear!"

"Maggie! Maggie! you'll kill me," groaned the poor father, dropping the leaves he had held, and sinking to a chair. "O my God; my child is a raving maniac. Maggie! Maggie! my pretty Maggie."

She was taken home, and her father, old and gray, and broken down from sorrow, cares for her tenderly and gently. To her he

is never stern, never hard; and the villagers all love and are very good to her, believing that the angels have peculiar charge over her. She has the freedom of the village but oftenest and longest she stays by a grave in the churchyard, which, she fancies, is Willie's grave; and poor Ophelia never cared for her father's more zealously than does Maggie for this one. It has been garlanded with flowers each weary day, for all these years, summer and winter, rain or sunshine. See, there is her white face again at the window, and I catch the refrain of her song:

"O Willie has gone and left me,
Left me in bitter pain,
Of every joy has bereft me,
But he'll come back again, again."

"Ha-ha-ha." And to the music of that chilling laughter she has vanished. Poor Maggie McLain!

March 4, 1865. For the *New York Mercury*.

MY DARLING

I would fain make a heroine of my darling, I would set her up as an idol and worship her, I would make all the world think her perfection, but that I know she is no heroine; and, though an idol to many fond, foolish hearts, she is not perfection, and the world will not think her so. She is only a faulty, flirting girl, but withal so sweet and lovable that one almost loves the faults. She is not beautiful, this girl; there are many fairer; not even pretty at times, but she is tall and graceful, with slender hands, and feet that move to the swift music as intuitively as her heart beats. She has shimmering shining eyes, never two moments the same color; and a mouth all melting tenderness, like nothing in the world but its own luxuriant scarlet self. She has fine teeth, a soft, sweet voice, and a childish way of looking up at one and saying innocent little things, which is perfectly bewitching. She is half innocent; thank God, I can believe her so — wholly coquettish; good, and true, and noble at heart, but to most of the world, foamy, fickle, and wild.

Alas! that she must be like the heathen idols — imperfection. She wins hearts and glories in her power; wears them as she does their glittering offerings, and just as carelessly throws them aside. I cannot tell you what is her charm; for she has neither birth, beauty, nor wealth, but she is charming. She has won me from my cynicism, she has won from many their cloistered hearts.

Will you listen now to a story of my darling, of the time when she was more of a child, and, it may be, purer than she is now. Do you wish a name for her? I have called her "Daisy," "Hearts-ease," "Mimosa," "Sweet Poem," but in my heart of hearts she is baptized "My Darling," you can call her as you like; since I first knew her, this has been her dearest name.

How well I remember our first meeting! We sat under the trees whose delicate tracery lay against the sky, and like sea-green broidery upon an azure robe, and the faint afternoon-sunshine flickered down upon the grass at our feet, lighting it faintly, and its golden glow fell upon the head of my darling like a benediction. We had been talking of my darling's fiancé, who had left her in this country. The beautiful poem of her love was commenced before I met her; had it not been, could I have written it in softer, happier cadences? I sometimes think so. A stranger-hand had taken the perfume from her heart, had stolen the dew from my daisy's girlhood while she still lingered,

"Where the brook and river meet,
Womanhood and childhood fleet,"

and she was, foolish birdie! happy in the theft; telling me, with a faint rosy flush on her face, like the first breaking of the coming day, "Oh, I am so happy and yet so miserable; so happy in being loved, so miserable in being separated from him." We became very confidential, my darling and I. I know she never knew how hard it was for me to play the rôle assigned, and I am glad she did not. She talked incessantly when with me of her hero; she was a perfect child, asking me with innocent face upraised: Was it very wrong for her to love him so? Was she foolish to think him so handsome, and good, and noble?

He was the handsomest fellow in the regiment. And so, I should judge, he was, from the picture she so often showed me.

And I put by my great love for this child-woman with a trembling hand, listening to her patiently, and answering her cordially.

A few months passed, and my darling's hero came for a few days. Those days were all sunshine for her, but they passed. He returned to his regiment, and she returned to me for comfort; I could not comfort that pale, tearless face, and those cold hands holding so tenderly to his last gifts. Time did what I could not, and my daisy visibly brightened again. She was true to the absent in heart and actions; she saw no company, and even her innocent desires for gayety were held in abeyance to her great love: letters came and went; letters from him — calm, loving, and pleasant, like fresh cool water; letters from her — sparkling, fiery, and rich in love — like rare old wine. Her own love so brightened and glorified his epistles, that they were very precious to her.

A blank came, and my darling grew pale and quiet. No letters, no tokens. She did not know that mails did not arrive from the Army until some weeks had passed. Then, in her childlike way, she reproached herself for having doubted him. Finally, letters came again to friends, but not to her, my darling; and she became her old gay self, rattling off songs, dancing all manners of queer dances, and chatting like a free-hearted child; but she grew pale, like winter-moonlight, and sometimes very, very sad.

I loved her then, I love her now; and I would have died to save her from the next fearful trial; but it is not my story I am telling. Many weary weeks before news came, then a telegram — “dead!” She heard it in silence, walked quietly up to her own room, closed the door, and fainted. Hours after, they found her there, my poor daisy! crushed and white, upon the floor, and for days she lay suffering under the terrible incubus of that one word. Then another telegram came — “Not dead, as reported, but dying,” and shortly after, a letter to my darling, written, as he thought, upon his deathbed. I thought the letter then honest and true. It must have been. It would (to my poor wisdom, as it seems) have been better for my

darling had he died then; but, contrary to all expectation, he recovered slowly; but, alas, maimed for life! This last terrible certainty was so bright in comparison to that she had feared, that my darling said, in the fullness of her loving heart, "Oh, thank God!" How well I remember this first meeting after he became convalescent! He heard her light step at the door, and called out, cheerily, "Come in, Birdie." She came, like a ray of sunshine, lighting the darkened room, unto him. He took both her hands in his, she stooping. Their lips met. Were mine white, then? They may have been.

My daisy read to him the long summer-afternoon, or talked in her merry loving way, until he forgot his sickness and joined in the merriment. They played cards, but never long; for my daisy always flew into a little rage if she were beaten, and threw the cards at the winner. Then, laughing at her own passion, would pick them up and put them away. He tried to teach her chess, but she did not want to learn, and would plead off so sweetly that the chess board usually found a place on the carpet as foot-stool to the little tyrant. Those were happy days to her. I never saw her during the summer; but I knew that she was happy, and that her "hero," as she termed him when he was quite well, was not. She teased him by "tragedizing," as she called it; threats to go on the stage, and, more than all, by flirting. Her old desires returned in full force — all the more so, perhaps, from having been kept in check for so long. She was soon her old teasing, tormenting, bewitching, bewildering, self, yet loving him wholly. Alas, he did not know how entirely he held her pure heart in his keeping. She was a sad flirt; but in the witchery of her presence he forgave her that; and when they parted, it was in the hope of being married in one year. Ah, the flowers will never blossom, and the birds will never sing for the year in which those two will marry. The golden chain which bound their hearts is broken, the urn shattered, and the perfume lost.

When my darling's hero came home from the war, he said to her: "I am poor and a cripple — you are free." But she laid her tender hand, on which shone her engagement-ring, upon his lips, and said, firmly, "Until death do us part." She was young and ambitious; but she did not hesitate, though the sad

truth of those words, "poor and a cripple," cut her to the heart. She was noble, and true, and loving, my dear darling; and I glory to think of it. I think I was proud of her heroism, then, though I was very unhappy.

But I shall never finish my story if I ramble so sadly. He went to Washington, this "hero" of my darling's, and I think his handsome face must have won him admiration. His letters grew colder, and my darling (she was but young, a gay, happy creature, and she loved pleasures), to forget them, flirted, danced, attended operas, parties, and wrote her lover weekly letters, as cold as his own.

Of course, Madam Rumor bore to him exaggerated accounts of her gayety; and gradually, slowly, but surely, the sun of their love went down.

The end came. A time when the ring was sent back, when she turned her white chill face to me, and said:

"Oh, Ernest, I have loved him so long, so long. It is hard to part forever."

I who had loved so long, so deep, could pity her, my poor daisy; and I am glad to think that perhaps my friendship was some little relief to her in her trouble.

She did not blame him, though she knew he was false. Once in her agony, she read his last note:

"May God bless you!" it ended.

"May God curse him!" she answered, through clenched teeth.

But the words were yet warm on her lips when she revoked them tearfully: "I did not mean it. Oh, I was wild, but I did not mean it. May God bless him!"

And after that I never heard a word of reproach.

My daisy did not die from her great sorrow; such hearts never break. She grew very white and delicate for a time, but I have never known her so gay as she was at the time of her greatest suffering.

"The lips may be gay, though the heart break," she said to me, one evening, when she paused for a moment from enacting Juliet on an entirely new method, to the great amusement of her auditors.

She would make a fine actress. I thought so as she stood with

her soulful eyes gazing affrightedly into space; her form quivering from apparent fear, her hand upraised and pointing, and her peculiarly low voice thrilling her listeners:

“ Oh, look, methinks I see my cousin’s ghost,
Seeking out Romeo’s, that did spit his body
Upon a rapier’s point.
Stay, Tybalt, stay; Romeo, I come.”

Down fell the uplifted hand, and she broke off with a gay laugh.

My darling was like a rainbow, constantly changing, but very bright in every change. She could sing, and dance, and flirt, but the quivering lips and paling cheek could not fail to tell me how she suffered.

Time has passed; a few brief months, but they have aged my daisy. She has lost much of her freshness, much of her youth, many of her sweet, childlike ways that were so charming. She has ceased to be what she was, and has become — my heart hesitates to acknowledge it — a practised flirt.

The sand of the world has passed over my pearl, and sullied it. It is still a pearl, I am glad to know it is still a pearl, though marred.

Do not think too ill of my darling, for at heart she is better and nobler than most girls who have given themselves to the sole labor of fashion.

There is but one word more, and I have written all that I can of her. Here is an extract from her letter:

“ I shall marry soon. I do not love my fiancé, though I respect him — my old time hero took all the strength out from my heart — but he loves me, and will be to me a true, noble husband. I shall marry him. It is something to have a man, and a manly man, who has traveled much, and seen many beautiful women, so perfectly devoted to such a flirt of a girl as I am.

“ My old flame passed to-day. My heart stood still until he was out of sight. I shall never love any one as I love him. I try to forget, but cannot. I shall marry soon. I must leave this life of excitement and find rest somewhere.”

My darling, O my darling. Once I wrote of her:

"I've found a gem in the heart of the world,
A pearl in the oyster shell;
And this rarest gem, because it is rare,
I will cherish most safely and well.

I'll set it about with the rubies of love,
They shall burn, and sparkle, and glow,
And I'll form them into an endless ring,
Which shall circle my idol so."

And it is not less true now that she is a little further from me. She is still my gem and my pearl; and the burning ring of my love shall separate her from the evil of the world; and I know that her good angel will sometime "make her to lie down in green meadows, and lead her beside the still waters" where she shall "find rest to her soul." My darling, O my darling, may this be soon!

March 18, 1865. For the *New York Mercury*.

THE TWIN SPIES

The sun was not an hour above the western horizon, when an officer, wearing the Confederate uniform, rode slowly through the gorge bearing the significant name of "Devil's Gap." It was a dark, dangerous place, being a narrow road, walled up on either side by rocks to the distance of nine or ten hundred feet, always dark, and the air was heavy with the fragrance of cedar. Through this, the officer quickened the pace of his steed, only drawing rein when once from out its shadow. Then he drank in all the beauty of the sunset as it gilded the mountains in the distance, and tinged the grand old pines nearby with crimson and gold. He came unattended, having apparently come but a short distance, and being in no particular hurry. Half a mile from the Gap he came to a rude log cabin, differing in nothing from those ordinarily built and occupied by the lowest class of whites, in the Border States. It was built, as I said, with logs unhewn, and the chinks filled in with plaster and pieces of rock, with a low door and two small windows in front; but from the latter the glass (if there ever had been any) was removed, and the former stood open to admit the evening air.

The cabin was surrounded by a wall built of boulders, piled one above the other, and overrun with vines, among which the scarlet flowers of the Virginia creeper shone conspicuously, giving a picturesque appearance to the whole habitation. The cabin being built on the mountain-side, the yard, or "farm" as it was called, ran up quite a distance, and constituted the sole support of the squatter's family. In the front part of the yard stood an old cart, with one wheel broken off, and the shafts more ingeniously than elegantly mended by odds and ends of rope. In this were crowded several ragged, dirty children, busily engaged in blowing soap-bubbles, and making as much noise as was practicable, considering the size of their lungs. At the door lounged the proprietor of the domain, a tall, lank fellow, lazily smoking his pipe. Inside the door sat a woman, engaged in mending old clothes. She was sweet and gentle in appearance, but broken down by hard labor and trouble. In the backyard, a young girl was digging potatoes. This much the officer noted as he followed the narrow path leading from the main road up to the gate of the cabin. The children, at sight of him, ceased their noise, and stared at him, and the man, in answer to his "Evening, Smith," left his seat and hobbled down to the gate, appearing very lame.

"How d'ye, Captain; I'm uncommon glad to see ye. Come in, can't ye. Here you, Peggy, come hold the Captain's critter," calling to the young laborer in the background.

She lifted a face which was angrily flushed, and her eyes were flashing with hatred.

"Hold his horse!" she hissed. "Wonder if he remembers stealing mine. Well, patience."

She conquered the expression on her face, wiped her plump hands on her apron, stuck her spade in the potato-hill, then went down to the walk cheerfully, humming a negro-melody. The officer smiled at sight of her pretty fresh, piquant face, and said:

"How do you do, my pretty."

"As I please," she returned sharply, catching the horse's bit.

"So do I," was the laughing retort, as the Captain sprang lightly from his saddle, and bestowed a hearty kiss upon the lips of the unsuspecting hostler.

Again her eyes flashed fire, and she struck her hand forcibly in his face, causing him to recoil suddenly.

"Why, girl!" he ejaculated, as he recovered himself. "Zounds, but those hands are strong. A dozen kisses wouldn't pay for that."

"No, for there'd be a dozen blows," she returned.

The Captain laughed good-naturedly, and followed the man Smith, who had been an amused spectator of the scene, to the cabin. Peggy tied the horse to one of the low cedars growing near the gate, and went back to her work, only selecting a hill near the window where she could hear all that was said, and not be observed herself. Listening attentively, the first words she heard were:

"I'll offer you more; will fifty dollars tempt you?"

"Well, Captain," was the answer, "ye see the chap's a kind of relation, second-cousin or something; but seein' it's for a good cause, I'll catch the young rascal. He's in the mountains here, I guess. You'll be certain and pay the fifty, Captain?"

"Yes, certainly. Best hurry up, Smith."

"Can't do nothing faster'n I can, Captain; no use talkin'. To-morrow mornin' I'll try and find him, if you send me some men."

"You're sure he's on the mountains?"

"Think so."

"Which one?"

"Stone Peak."

"Well, I'll guard that; and if you have need to pass the sentries, remember the password is 'Pete.' How is it," lowering his voice, "with the girl?"

"She's true as steel, though she has spunk, and won't have her brother talked about."

"Sure she is true?"

"Certain. Why, yesterday, when some Feds come up for a snack to eat, what did she do but fill their wallets with old papers, every one on 'em. She's a cute one, is Peg."

"Old papers!" ejaculated the Captain. "What kind of papers?"

"Everything she could find. She put in precious little lunch, and a deal of old papers and old leaves."

The Captain was evidently not satisfied.

"You'd best watch her," he said. "She may be all right, but he's such a confounded scamp; best keep an eye on her. I'll guard that mountain, every pass; and you'll take him to-morrow, dead or alive — remember."

The officer arose, and, seeing Peggy at the far end of the lot, whither she had suddenly betaken herself, called out, "Peggy, girl, won't you give me a good-night kiss," laughing and rubbing his cheek as he went down the path. Peggy deigned no answer, only gave a spiteful slap at one of the children who was passing, at which the Captain "ha-ha-ed," and then mounting his horse rode away. As for Peggy, she went into the house and began preparing supper.

"Peggy," said Smith, putting on a careless air, "haven't heerd nothin' from yer brother, have ye?"

"You say I ain't," she retorted, coolly, "and if you say so, I spose it's so."

"Can't ye be civil? I don't mean the chap no harm."

"Ugh," said Peggy, "what business is it of yours whether I have or whether I ain't? 'Cause the lad's wrong in one thing he ain't goin' to be talked agin, I tell ye."

"It's none of my business, gal, true enough, only curiosity asked."

"Then let curiosity answer, I ain't goin' to," returning to her work in the little shed.

"Don't tease her, John," called out the meek wife from her window. "She ain't got no chance to learn nothin', you know very well."

"You shut up, will ye," answered the pattern husband. "I don't reckon she has; but I say, Peg, you're true to the cause, ain't ye?"

"Yes," she returned, "I'M true to the cause;" adding in an undertone, "He little knows what cause; true as steel: I'll die for it, or what's more, let Pete die."

"Good for you, gal. I told the Captain I knowed you was all right, and you ain't a gal to lie."

Here the conversation ended. The meal was ready and disposed of, the children stowed away for the night, and shortly after, according to custom, the family retired, going to bed with

the sun. Midnight, and one of them was astir — the girl Peggy. Up, dressed, and with a basket of provisions, she undid the bar from the door, and passed out. It was a cloudy night, and a faint moon only made ghastly shadows, without affording much light. The girl shuddered slightly as she glided softly out of the gate and down the road, and the shuddering was changed to trembling when she entered the "Devil's Gap"; but she was brave, and had a purpose at heart; so she trudged on until a narrow path up the mountain-side presented itself. Up this she climbed, starting at every sound, well knowing that stragglers from both armies were likely to be lurking there. Up, up she climbed, stooping frequently where the underbush grew over the path to raise the bushes and crawl under them. Winding around the mountain, in a path like the threads of a screw, she at last came to an immense rock jutting over the cliff. Under this she took her stand, giving a low call like the call of a cat-bird. It was answered by another, higher up the mountain. Again she repeated the signal, and then there was a slight rustling and bending of the bushes above her, and a lad let himself down from above, gave her a cordial kiss, took the basket, and began eagerly to devour the contents.

"Pete," said Peggy, "do you know they've set a price on your head?"

Pete lifted the head which was "priced," and said, "More fools, they! It ain't worth it; I didn't know they took heads in these days. First-rate meal, sis. I was very hungry."

"Never mind that, Pete; I tell you your life's in danger. I've fed you for two weeks here, but now every pass is guarded but the old one that I know of, and, perhaps it is; 'twasn't when I came, though. Smith has promised to give you up for fifty dollars."

"Sets my value pretty high," said the boy, coolly. "Won't give me up till he gets me, will he? but sis, how about the news?"

"I gave it to the Colonel in his haversack. That's all right."

"Good."

"Now," pondered the girl, "I've a plan for getting you off safe. If you can get to Cumberland, the Colonel is there, and you'll be nicely saved."

From easy good-nature the boy's face changed to anxiety; and he said, earnestly, "I've been in a good many dangers, sis, and I'll try to get out of this, as well as those. Let's hear your plans."

"There's but one way, Pete. I must stay here, and you must go to Smith's, stay all night, get breakfast in the mornin', wash the young ones, and then Mrs. Smith'll send you to Cumberland to sell 'taters. If you can do this, you're safe. They never can tell us apart; we talk alike and act alike, and I'll give you the password, so that if there are guards on the path now you can pass. I'll stay here, and join you as soon as I can."

There was a mixture of the refined girl and the low squatter about Peggy's language which struck one forcibly. Not educated herself, she had been with her brother a great deal during the past year, whom she had aided in getting a few years' schooling, and this intimacy had raised her language and ideas very materially above the level of her relatives, the Smiths.

Pete laughed at the plan so earnestly given, then said: "You're a cute girl, sis, and a good one; but I can't wash young ones, cook, and clean dishes."

"Yes, you can, Pete, you allus used to help me. Don't take such long steps, that's all. But be quite as surly as I am of a mornin'—givin' the young ones a slap side o' the head, every once in a while. Good my hair's short. Now we must change clothes."

The exchange was soon effected; but so complete was the resemblance between the twins, that it seemed no change had been made.

"Sis," said Pete, "you've been a good sister to me, and are all I have in the world. I'd never leave you here alone if I didn't know the good Lord would take care of you. I'll wait for you in Cumberland; and, now, if we never meet again, good-bye and, God bless you."

He held her a moment in his arms, received the password, and then they parted; Pete to go down the mountain—brave, daring boy that he was!—and his equally brave sister to spend the remainder of the night in the rocks.

Half-way down the pass, Peter was met by an order to "halt," and accordingly halted, gave the password coolly, and after a

keen glance and, "What's a gal doin' up here at this hour?" to which he replied, that the Captain sent him, he was allowed to pass. Beyond this he met no other danger.

The morning rose brightly, and Pete rose with it, awakened the young ones, and proceeded to dress them; making so many blunders, that Mrs. Smith aroused herself enough to say:

"Seems to me, Peggy, I wouldn't put Johnny's pants on Mary, and Mary's frock and sun-bonnet on Johnny. What ails you this morning? you must be asleep."

The meal got on no better; and finally the wily Peter, finding that he could not do Peggy's work, burst into tears, declaring that he had dreamed some one was trying to get Pete to hang him; and so worked upon her kind-hearted cousin's sympathy that she got the meal and said:

"Peggy, best dig them few taters and then take them to the town. They're worth their weight in silver, I reckon, and the walk'll do ye good, gal; so hurry up."

This was just what Pete desired of all things, and he proceeded with such alacrity that Mrs. Smith ejaculated:

"Lud, what a team that gal is when she's a mind to be."

At the gate Pete met Smith.

"Why, Peg," he said, "you're brown as a berry; do for the Army a'most. Goin' to the town?"

"Reckon," said Pete, starting off in exact imitation of Peggy. "If I ain't goin' nowhere else."

"Ugh!" ejaculated Smith. "Cross as a bear."

On went Peter, reached the city in safety and penetrated to the Colonel's sanctum-sanctorum by means best known to himself, to whom he delivered his important budget of news, and received, in return, the sincere thanks of the Colonel; for money he would not, excepting pay for the potatoes.

Just as he was preparing to leave, the guard brought in Peggy. By some means she had been captured on the mountains and brought in.

Her, the Colonel declared to be his real spy; but though some difficulty was found to convince him to the contrary, it was finally accomplished.

Pete was furnished with a Federal uniform and sent to the

ranks again; and Peggy, resuming her own clothes, taking the empty basket and money, trudged back to her quondam home; and though that was one year ago, Mrs. Smith still speaks of "how queer it was that chap got out from the mountain, no one knew how, when they was all a lookin' for him; and how Peggy acted, boxing Johnny's ears 'cause Mary cried, and doing all sorts o' odd things fur her."

March 25, 1865. For the *New York Mercury*.

LADIES PROMENADE

A grand ball, in aid of a great charity, came off last week in New York, and the rich ladies who attended it wore white powder on their hair. Others had their hair plentifully sanded with gold, and some wore golden ornaments that were quite as large as the small street-bonnets worn now-a-days. How can women expect men to regard them as more than playthings when they spend the burden of their lives in personal adornment, and carry empty minds, to unfit them for the greater enjoyments than those of the sense or the leisure?

A rambling but readable letter ensues, speaking of almost everything out of the range of controversy.

Dear *Mercury*: — If Ernest can be so cordially received into your columns, you will surely not shut Ernesta from the dear Ladies' Promenade, since she has, as is the fate of the maid-creation, all of the labor and little of the glory. She realizes the fact which Josh Billings so graphically quotes, as "some have greatness hove upon them," and thinks that all the feminine creation wish unselfishly to heave greatness upon their so-called lords and masters. Don't think, I pray you, that she aids and abets so laudable an undertaking, for that would be beyond her power, but she states the fact for further elucidation, from some of the dear Sisters of the Promenade.

This brings me to first person, singular number, feminine gender. Dear Colonel, may I enter the Promenade, followed by one great terror, of course,— for when is it that it don't follow me — and claim sympathy of the dear Sisters and yourself?

This great terror, in common parlance, is termed a black cat, but to me it has long since become the black cat of all the world. Listen to my story, and judge of my trials.

Pity and compassionate me. I have need of all your sympathy. I am not naturally unhappy, or discontented with my lot. "The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places;" but I have two great terrors, going down the cellar-steps and the Black Cat. The steps are neither so steep, nor so long, nor so slippery as those I descended, head first generally, in my youthful days. In fact, not so much so as those which even in later times I have taken great pleasure in ascending at Niagara — in reality not steep, or long, or slippery at all; only six little narrow steps, which the rusty nails are too indolent, or careless, or infirm, to hold together. These steps descend to a trap-door in the kitchen-floor. This door has a very doubtful fastening against the kitchen-wall, which looks as though it might cease to be a fastening at the precise moment when one was half way down those steps. I hope I am not a coward, but knowing that I must descend twice a day, I begin to tremble the moment they are mentioned. I lift the door, and lay it carefully back; then put one trembling foot upon the first stair. A table reaches a friendly leaf to me, I grasp it, and attempt a backward descent, whereupon the table executes the difficult feat of standing upon its two fore-legs, to the great danger of sundry crockery, etc. I release the wing, and it ceases its gymnastic performances. I reach the trap-door, but it has so decided an intention of coming down upon my devoted head, that I release it also, and seize the floor, then gradually, but womanfully make the perilous descent, step by step, and accomplish it. This is the shadow of the skeleton in my closet. The bona-fide article is embodied in the shape of a dark cat. Dark is it? Shadow of Pluto! Black — she is all black, but her round yellow eyes have a sulphurous gleam very much such as must belong to Hades; and her mouth has a perpetual inclination to stand open, revealing sharp white teeth and a scarlet tongue.

Somehow I fancy that cat is animated by somebody's spirit; somebody who was my enemy, I'm sure, or she wouldn't haunt me so; somebody who was wicked, or she wouldn't look so like an imp belonging to his Majesty Tartarus; somebody who was

starved to death, or she wouldn't have such an unconscionable appetite.

This cat, this black cat haunts me. I cannot go to the back-door but she rises from the depths of the slop-pail, her glittering eyes turning into mine, her mouth wide open; or rushes at me from the stoop, or flies from me like a "brimstone creature," always careful to brush my clothes as she passes.

I cannot go downstairs but she must crawl under a board upon which I am compelled to step, (I do so in fear and trembling, I assure you; but the evil spirit which I know is in that cat, should prove the vincibility of board, and rise to my everlasting ruin). I cannot run upstairs but that tormenting plague must needs be going down, and shoots past me, startling me by a vague, undefined shadow, with flaming eyes. If I were a Catholic, I should cross myself, tell my beads, and utter an Ave Marie, whenever she appears. Had I the profound faith necessary, I might be enabled so to exorcise her, but I am inclined to believe that a spirit so black, so evil, so audacious and voracious, would not stir for ban, or bead, or prayer. All the Roman Priesthood, backed by the whole calendar of saints to boot, could not move her. She lives and haunts me. I think she lives on purpose to haunt me, to provoke me to throwing pails of cold water on her, and to agitating small billets of wood in her direction, to hear my flattering bene(?)dictions upon herself. I really think she has a delight in being designated as "Imp," "Satan," "Demon," "Ghost," and "sable Dickens." I really do think the spirit in that cat is so depraved, that it enjoys my agony, my impatience, and my anger, and even my fear.

Why, I go around the house to avoid that cat. I step into the snow, or mud giving her path, or ignominiously rush in the house and lock the door; sure, even then, that her eyes are turning into mine through the key-hole or that I shall see her terrible corpus projecting itself through the window where a pane is out, and the shutters are open, which latter I dare not close lest I be seized (mentally) by the sight of that arch fiend.

I'm afraid her fancy will be the death of me some day. As I said I hope I am not cowardly, I believe I could walk up to a cannon and be shot at like a Christian (and sure it wasn't loaded). I am almost sure I could endure to have a moder-

ately-large tooth extracted; but worse than cannon, more terrible than teeth, is this monster. I feed her, and she opens her mouth and comes closer all the same. I can't kill her. Every one knows a cat has nine lives, and if I should do away with one, I know — to a melancholy certainty, that the unity being destroyed, the other eight would immediately resolve themselves into separate black cats, with yellow eyes, and I should have the whole crowd upon me at once. If I were a heathen, I'd sacrifice her to the gods once a day for three weeks, provided that I could be assured that each separate piece would not develop into a new cat, to follow the example of her illustrious predecessor.

Saints and angels what shall I do? I fain cry! What do they know of that spirit of darkness? I do not like to call on the darker angels, thereby becoming a modern Faust — selling my soul for, not riches, nor honor, nor love, but a black cat. If the spirit which animates her don't get tired, I'm sure I'll have to vacate the premises. But she'd follow me I know.

“Through bush, through brier,
Over park, over pale,
Through flood, through fire,
Over hill, over dale.”

I am quite certain she “would wander everywhere” after my miserable self.

Will you let me into the charmed circle of the Promenade column? I will not be so tedious another time.

ERNESTA.

April 1, 1865.

KITTIE CLYDE'S HERO

“Was she pretty?” Yes, I think so. Not at all beautiful, but a wildering, winsome kind of prettiness, which was very winning. You never saw any one just like her, for she was only like herself, and hardly that. She had tempting lips and witching eyes, hidden under long coquettish lashes; a pleasing, pleasant face that was always fresh, and pure, like the dew in the heart of a rose before the sun is up.

By the way, do you lady-readers ever think in how difficult position we are placed by you — how you hem us in between Scylla and Charybdis on the question of beauty? If we assert that our heroine is beautiful, then “that is the old story. Of course all heroines are lovely, but it is a desperate departure from nature.” If, on the other hand, we say she is homely, then you are dissatisfied, and “wish she were beautiful.” How, acting according to the laws of motion in reference to a body impelled by equal force, acting in opposite directions, I, of course, can go neither, but must remain quiescent or take my own course. Therefore, in spite of opposing criticism I am compelled to aver that Kittie Clyde was just as pretty as melting mouth, and wildering eyes, and witching smiles could make her. Tall enough to be womanly, small enough to be child-like; wise enough to be trusted, simple enough to be trusting; loving to pet and fondle, and more liking to be petted and fondled. At once, a womanly child, and a childish woman; an unblown bud, with the fragrance of the full blown rose closely sheltered in its heart. She was not particularly inclined to coquetry, though woman-like fond of displaying her power. She had as yet broken no hearts, but one she had taken entire, and held subservient to her despotic little will, bound closely by the silken cords of her love. Kittie loved this one heart better than all the world besides. This great, noble, manly heart, which had chosen her as its one jewel of great price; and she loved its kindly shelter, feeling that it was the truest heart that ever beat — the heart of her hero.

The village was in a “flutter,” for a stranger had appeared. A dashing, flashing fellow, resplendent in a new suit of lavender, and an immense cluster-diamond, which latter was worn upon his little finger, set all Wishton crazy. Of course, this star saw and was introduced to our Kittie and, just as a matter of course, then and there began a desperate flirtation between Miss Kittie Clyde and Mr. Dick Wilton, much to the discomfiture of Robert Duncan, Kittie’s “hero.”

“Kittie,” said the latter gentleman, one sweet, cool morning in July, when all the youth of the village were preparing for a grand afternoon on the river, and tea on the island — which lay like an emerald in its silver setting — and a moonlight row

homeward. "Of course, you'll go with me. I've chartered a gem of a boat for the purpose."

Kittie began playing with the tassels of her wrapper, looking out at him from the corners of her eyes.

"Well — no, Robert. You're too late in the day. I promised Mr. Wilton yesterday to go with him."

"Alone, Kittie?"

"Why, yes. Why not? He's chartered a little skiff."

Robert's brow darkened.

"Do you mean what you say?" he asked a little sternly.

Kittie arched her brow slightly.

"Of course I do. How dull you are growing, Robert! I said, Mr. Wilton had engaged me to go with him."

"Very well," said Robert. "Very well. Good-morning Miss Clyde, "turning away.

"Robert, Robert; what is the matter? Come right back here. You're a perfect bear, a tiger, a —"

Robert went back, his face all sunshine.

"I was an idiot; I might have known you were only joking, and you will go with me, Kittie, won't you? and you won't go with that Wilton, will you?"

"Won't you? Will you? Won't you?" echoed the little tease, laughing her little laugh. "Of course, I meant it; and I will, and I won't. Seriously, Robert — now don't look so like a tiger-cat; that's a fine fellow — I've promised Dick, and I must go. Indeed I must."

"But it's not right, Kittie."

Robert's face was in shadow again.

"Why not. I should be pleased to know, Mr. Robert Duncan?"

"Simply, because I am to be of the party, and very much prefer taking care of you myself."

"You do. Well, I don't see that to-day. I prefer to be taken care of by some one else."

"What do you mean by that? Always?"

"It is immaterial to me," said Kittie, lightly slipping the broad ring upon her finger up and down.

"Do you know what you are saying?" demanded Robert, fiercely.

"Perfectly, I think."

"Then listen to me. I am not like that ring, capable of being slipped on and off at pleasure; and once for all, if you go this afternoon under the charge of Dick Wilton, he may keep you. We are nothing to each other after that. I await your decision."

How the cheeks flushed and the red lips curled!

"Pray, don't," she returned, coldly. "It would be a waste of your precious time. Allow me to return your fetter, Sir."

She slipped the ring from her finger into his hand. It rolled to the walk, and he set his foot upon it, grinding it into powder.

"So," he said, bitterly, "perish all the love I ever had for this froth of the sea!"

"Amen," echoed Kittie, laughing. "I wish you a good-morning, Sir."

Up the gravel walk she tripped lightly, with face flushed, and eyes moist, but her clear tones broke into singing, "Merrily, merrily on the Sea"; and every glad tone fell like sharp lightning upon the heart of Robert Duncan. He did not dream how heavy the heart was under that laughing face, nor how soon in her own room she was sobbing bitterly, nor the desolate whiteness of her hand, and kissing the small marks left by the "fetter."

Robert Duncan strode fiercely away, manlike, blaming Kittie much, himself none; and in that angry hour engaged Marie Guest, Kittie's especial aversion, to accompany him.

Laughter and music, and singing, chatting, and cheering, and commands; the merry chime of bells, and then off shoved the boats from the shore, five of them, out in the turquoise river. Kittie and Wilton took the lead in light canoe; Marie and Robert brought up the rear. It was a merry rowing party upon a still river, and under a cloudless sky. All were in the best of spirits, apparently, and the music of gay laughter and glad songs floated over the waves; oftenest and gayest, Kittie's clear tones and Robert's manly ones. Little dreamed the party that those two, under so much gayety, were suffering intensely. Foolish little Kittie wondered that the boat didn't sink, overlaid by her heavy heart. But, finally, the island was reached; lunch was prepared and partaken of, the baskets repacked, and

dancing on the green commenced. How the long grass curled itself mischievously about the tripping feet! How many falls there were, and how the unfortunate ones were laughed at! But laughter reached its climax when Kittie fell! Wilton picked her up gallantly, kissed the grasses just raising themselves from the pressure of her feet, repeating:

“ Even the hare-bell raised its head
Elastic from her airy tread.”

And Kittie was like a little rosebud for blushing. Robert Duncan watched this scene with lowering brow, and bit his lip till the blood came, when Wilton touched his lips to Kittie's fair hand. But this harpy at the feast was unobserved.

Evening-shadows were falling. The party had re-embarked, and Kittie and her escort, only waiting a few moments after the last boat pushed off, entered theirs. Robert and Marie had not pushed off from the shore yet. Wilton allowed the boat to float slowly down stream, listening to the music of “Ossian's Serenade,” and the steady dipping of oars as it came to them from the fast-receding party, talking in his pleasant, dashing style of Venice, and Rome, and Naples; and finally, coming nearer home:

“Miss Kittie,” he said, half playfully, half earnestly, “it is a notable fact that I who have been in the rarest gardens of the world, have found the rarest rose in the wilderness, out here.” He added, musingly, “I wonder if it is ‘born to blush unseen.’” Blushing, the “rarest rose” certainly was, and he saw it under the moonlight, but went on: “Do you know this has been one of the happiest days of my life? What is it?” suddenly, as Kittie leaned very far over the water to catch her fan which had fallen — “don't lean so; you'll upset the boat — take care!”

Alas, too late! Kittie was in the water and the boat capsized. Wilton could not swim, but he clung desperately to the oar, calling to Kittie to come to him as he floated down stream. She lifted her white face above the cruel waters, buoyed up by her clothing, and from her lips came a cry which froze the blood in the heart of Robert Duncan as it reached him on the waters.

“Help! Robert! Robert!” He was some distance from her, but a few rapid, fierce strokes brought his canoe near her.

"Courage, Kittie! I am here," he called to her; and the next moment he had caught the poor, fainting form in his arms, drawn her into the boat, and satisfied that she was not injured, thanks to her airy clothing, only fainting. He saw the drifting boat before him, heard Wilton's cry, and rowed to him. Him he aroused from the deathly fear which was killing him, and took him, with a kind of pitiful contempt, under his own care, listening to his excuses for leaving Kittie, "because he was unable to swim," with clenched hands.

Kittie was very white, and weak, and dripping; and it was with a heavy heart that Duncan carried her home that night. Three days passed, and not once had Robert Duncan called to hear of Kittie's welfare, though Dick Wilton had been each day to inquire. Kittie felt this neglect deeply. She did not know that he had inquired every day of her uncle; but feeling grateful to him, as well as repentant for all of her naughty deeds, on the third day, she sent for him, and he, in accordance with that request, presented himself in the parlor, calm, kind, and manly, her old hero. Just as he entered, the servant came in, bringing her Dick Wilton's card.

"Engaged," said Kittie, with a slight curl to her lips.

The servant bowed and withdrew.

She was sitting in an easy-chair, looking very white and delicate, like a snow-drop, and Robert's heart smote him as he saw her. She offered one hand with a smile and said gently, "I am glad to see you, Mr. Duncan."

He took the little hand, held it a moment, then released it, saying, "I am happy to see you so much better."

"Yes, I am better — much," was the reply, as he took a chair opposite her, "but I feel as though the wings of the death-angel had passed over me, I can feel their shadow yet."

"You do look a little shadowed," Robert returned, smiling gravely.

She lifted her clear, truthful eyes to his and said, half-sadly. "I am. I sent for you to thank you, if such can be done by words, for saving my life and to tell you that I am sorry" — a casting down of the eyes, a flushing of the waxen face, and she went on steadily "that I ever gave the preserver of my life any pain."

"You owe me no thanks," he said, carefully avoiding mentioning her name, "for I did but an act of common humanity — as for the other part of your sentence, are you sorry merely because Fate placed you under obligations to me?"

Kittie was silent, and he went on softly.

"I, too, have a confession to make. I was jealous and overbearing, and blinded by passion, when I said what I did. Will you forgive, and dare I ask — forget that I said it?"

He bent eagerly toward her, took the hand she offered between his own, and retained it there.

"Will you," he repeated, under his breath.

"Yes, Mr. Duncan, if I had anything to forgive, I forgive you freely."

How that "Mr. Duncan" wounded him she knew by his quick drawn breath.

"Will you forgive me, Mr. Duncan?"

"Certainly, else I should not have dared ask it of you; we parted in anger, and it came near being true that the tender grace of a day that is dead could never come back to us."

"The tender grace of a day that is dead," she repeated, wearily. "How restful that sounds, and I am so tired."

Closer to her bent Robert, all the old love deepening his voice. "Kittie, will you have all the old rest back again? Answer me truly, as you hope for Heaven, my darling."

"O my darling," and Kittie reached up her arms to him like a child pleading to be taken up, twined them about his neck, and repeated softly, "I will have the old rest back again my darling, O my darling!" And she has had it ever since, the one jewel shining in the heart of her hero, his one rose of all the world, Kittie Clyde.

April 8, 1865. For the *New York Mercury*.

THE HEROIC MANY

We are in church, reader — that is, I am, and you are in duty bound to follow me, for I want to converse with you of those whom Grace Greenwood styles "the heroic in common life."

Ah, but it is not common life; no life is that. True there are thousands of just such little frame churches in little villages all over the land, and filled with just such an assemblage of good, bad, and foolish and wise, but each life is uncommon, each in itself a perfect unity; each, like the varnished leaves of the mulberry-tree, in some way differing from all the rest. Shall we not enter the low, narrow door, and take one of those rude, uncushioned benches, in our search for the heroic?

"Look for the heroic in a village church?" do you ask? There, you needn't trouble yourself to curl your lip. These plain, honest people would never understand it. They are not educated in the expression of lips, such as the "curl haughty," "curl supercilious," etc., etc.

They would say: "Are we not in the image of God? You are not more; we do not understand you; we, being made in so lofty a model, have no superiors, excepting our great Model." Well, among this people we shall find the heroic; and not here only, but in every little church in the land, we shall find — rough forms, inclosing rarest minds and hearts. First look at the clergyman, you can just see his small bald head, fringed with sandy hair, resembling nothing so much as an unripe sunflower, divested of its ends, and still retaining its whorl of yellow petals, peering above the tall old-fashioned pulpit. See, he gives a little smile of recognition toward the purple lilacs nodding in at the open window, and a grateful glance toward the sunshine, lying so goldenly on the new pine flooring; you can see the face worn thin by suffering, and hear the monotonous, unmusical voice, and know that his sermon is as uninteresting as his appearance. Would you think that man a hero? Would you ever imagine that his head should be surmounted with a halo of glory instead of that sandy hair? Perhaps not and yet, when we are "judged according to righteous judgment," that man will surely stand in a place of honor. Let me tell you, he was born poor; the son of a widow — labored through a toilsome boyhood, knowing what it was to be hungry, and ignorant of ever experiencing the delights of plenty — went humbly through college as a charity-scholar, and finally graduated, prepared for the ministry. Now, supposing, that all the bitter, petty trials of his young life, borne gently and patiently, that he might the

better "fight the good fight," have not made of him a hero, let me give you the one greatest act of heroism.

At this time a relative, very distant, died, leaving him heir to a large fortune. Then for a few months our minister enjoyed plenty. He bought and furnished a beautiful residence, and installed his mother as head of the household. He surrounded her and himself with beautiful things, rare plants, and articles of virtu, all that gratified his fine taste; and besides, he scattered good things with a lavish hand. None were refused aid who were in need, and his days glided by like a rich strain of music, sweet and cheering, with no discord; but then came a letter from the daughter of this relative, saying that her father had disowned her in anger; that her husband was dead, and her children starving, and rightfully the property was hers, though not lawfully.

Poor minister! he who had so craved luxury, who had found a few hours in which he need not fight the dread monster, Poverty, was now confronted with this Medusa's head; and, after a bitter but silent struggle, he conquered, sold his beautiful purchase, and restored, penny for penny, the fortune to its rightful owner.

Since then, he has lived on six hundred a year, in that little white frame house to the right, which you can see through the open door. In this day, when the Lord makes up its jewels, shall he not be required?

Now look again. Do you see that little woman in black sitting in the corner, with a smile of faint sunshine, and a tender light in her eyes, like dew upon the brown shell of a chestnut? She isn't very handsome, or very remarkable; only the village dressmaker could get the poor to look up to her as flowers to heaven, and pray in the depths of their hearts, "God bless her!" How she glorifies her labor! She has loved and lost. Before even the clasp which bound her love to her outwardly was clasped, her woman's fingers severed the links.

"Though the sweet brow sweat with pain,
Drops of blood like purple rain.
And the trembling lips must shrink
White with anguish as they drink."

Still duty pointed, and she followed. Now for years, from her bright girlhood, even till now, she has been the constant support and nurse of a mother who for years has never risen from her bed. She has a cheering word and smile for all, and especially the poor. Gentle always to them, she is Christ-like, and many a hard-earned penny is slipped timidly into the hand of one more needy than herself.

Now glance at the tall, thin form which is striding down the aisle. Homely, isn't she? And abrupt, and quick, and uncivil, and unrefined? Yes, all of them. She can plow a furlough with the best of men, and reap and mow, and sow too, for that matter. Her hands are large, and rough, and brown, and her face looks the shell of a last summer's walnut.

She works on the farm — does man's work; but oh, she is a goodly tree, since "every tree is known by its fruit"; and hers, though but the work of one woman's head, heart, and hand, will reach in widening cycles to Eternity. Ah, yes, and through eternity. Three brothers, orphaned in childhood, are in college, two of them preparing for the ministry, and one sister is teaching now in the far West, educated by the fruits of this woman's labor — this diamond in the rough. Every cent has been furnished by her industry; and now yonder in that far corner of the churchyard do you see that grass-grown grave? Over it the village children tie love-knots, and tell how that he who lies there loved Miranda, but one night he was caught among a gang of robbers, and imprisoned, and how Miranda released him, staying in his place; but that he was followed and shot in their attempts to capture him — some say accidentally — and the finger of scorn was pointed at Miranda. Poor girl. Through it all she never faltered in her duty, though her heart was broken. What wonder if she is hard, and cold, and stern, while that grave lies before her constantly, though she never looks toward it? There is one made deep in her heart forever. Under the ice, the clear, quiet waters of deep rivers glide, all the warmer for the covering.

Will you say again that you cannot find the heroic many scattered through the world like flowers? But, see, the little clergyman has ceased his sermon, and the congregation are slowly winding down the narrow aisle, and out into the sweet air;

so will you and I, reader, though we have been studying the sweetest of Nature's works — noble, heroic hearts.

May 13, 1865. For the *New York Mercury*.

CHIBBY, THE CONTRABAND;

OR

THE CAROLINIAN BROTHERS

The story which I here relate came about in this manner. A few friends were spending the evening in our little parlor not long since, and among them a lady and gentleman who had fled from the South upon the breaking out of the Rebellion. They were staunch Unionists, and had many incidents of their escape to narrate which were very interesting, being told with spirit and truth. The gentleman had also served as an officer in one of our regiments for a short time and his stories of camp life were not the least fascinating which were told. To these we listened unweariedly and probably should have continued to do so all evening had it not been that our little sister Zelia, wearying of the conversation as children will, softly commenced a poem to herself.

"What is that, Zelia?" asked one of the guests.

"Go on, dear," pleaded a second.

"A poem by ma belle Zelia!" playfully announced a third.

And the child blushing very much at being so unexpectedly thrust into notice, and trying to hide her pretty face beneath her blushes, repeated in her sweet, clear voice:

"Invisible finger of air,
Just lifted the curtain's fold,
Just rippled the calm of her golden hair,
Beautiful, treacherous gold.
And she stood like the thought of a sculptor, carved
In marble, snowy and cold;
But her pure sweet look was as foul a lie
As ever a woman told."

"I never knew but one woman who could answer to that description," said the Southern lady, "and she owned the plan-

tation adjoining ours in North Carolina. She was the cruelest and haughtiest woman I ever saw."

"And the handsomest," declared the husband.

"What became of her, please?" asked little Zelia. Whereupon the whole party like a crowd of curious children, clamored for the story, and the lady said: "I cannot tell what became of her, for I do not know, but I can give you the story of her slave Chibby until he left the plantation; and, oddly enough, since he has entered the army my husband has learned the finale."

So she gave us the facts very concisely, and even the child Zelia's bright eyes lost none of their brilliancy during its relation; and later, pleasing half the child and half myself, I took the thread and clothed it lightly here in the form I present it!

Framed in by the graceful drooping curtains, motionless save as the coy breeze touched her playfully, rustling the folds of her dress and breaking the burnished gold of her hair into tiny waves and billows, as though it were bathing in a golden sea and tossing the yellow sprays about it, tall and stately, and graceful, stood the mistress of LaHarpe. She was past the flush and beauty of youth, but was still very handsome; from the arch of her slender foot to the crown of her royal head; from her taper fingers rosy tipped, to the smoothest braid of her yellow hair, she was fine looking. Nature and art had conspired to make her a queen, and they had succeeded. She was utterly non-impassioned, or rather non-impulsive; for after all, it is these still, calm women who, in their hearts, are most passionate. They are like the smooth, silent sheet of water directly beneath Niagara Falls. The boiling billows sink to such a depth that they fail to ripple the glassy surface. Above, all is peaceful quietude; beneath all is angry passion.

Standing there by the window that calm afternoon, listening apparently to the pleasant chatter of a robin who was spending the honeymoon with his bride in a cedar near by, and who talked love-nonsense most tirelessly while she built the nest — as it is the custom of some human lover-husbands, if the truth were told — she did not appear cruel or unkind, and had Colonel Harper, her gallant husband, seen her then, he would have declared, with his inimitable bow and perfect admiration of his young wife:

"She is a very fine woman, indeed! I do think she is certainly the finest woman I ever saw!"

And so she certainly was, viewed from his standpoint. A loving mother to their only son, a stylish, agreeable wife, but a most bigoted Church-woman, and a most infamous mistress. She forgot the robin, if she had thought of him at all, when the scene without was slightly varied by the sudden appearance of two persons upon the grassy terrace.

One was a gentleman's son, tall and slender, with yellow curls and blue cold eyes, very like the lady observing him from the window, so very like her that you would have known him for her son. The other was a young man of twenty-five, tall and dark, and singularly handsome, with a scornful curl upon his haughty lip, as though he lived in a state of perpetual contempt for the life he lived, and for himself for living it. He held now two fierce dogs by a chain, one of which was limping somewhat, and whining in his master's face. The boy, at least ten years his junior, stood carelessly striking his glossy boot with his riding-whip, and angrily berating his slave. From the room the lady saw that her fair son was losing temper, but she smiled a little, saying softly to herself: "Henry has fine spirit. He can do what I have failed, with that fellow," She bent nearer towards the window, and his voice smote her ear.

"You hurt him yourself, you lazy brute! You know you did, and I'll not let you off, so mind that!"

"I did not hurt him, mas'r," was the firm response. "I told you Jupe threw at a chicken, and the stone shied, striking Ponto."

"Jupe says he didn't," returned the boy. "I told you to see to them, and in your infernal temper, you've ruined that dog for a month. I'll teach you better, you black scoundrel! Take that — and that!"

The whip left its playful switching of his glossy boot, and fell cruelly again and again upon the shoulders of the slave. He stood with head erect, and flashing eyes, perfectly motionless. Again and again fell the merciless blows, eliciting no cry from the sufferer's lips, nor even a motion to avoid the lash. Once, when the whip cut its crimson track across his cheek, he shuddered, but that was all the consciousness he gave.

The lady at the window watched this scene with coldly cruel eyes, never making a motion to interrupt it, but seeming to derive a quiet satisfaction therefrom; but it had another observer.

From his library window, Colonel Harper heard the angry words and blows. He left his books, and stepping through the window to the broad piazza, viewed the scene with the most intense displeasure, letting his eyes rest admiringly upon the handsome Stoic, who stood erect and stately under the stinging chastisement.

"Henry!" he shouted sternly, "what are you about there? Come here, both of you."

Henry's whip fell, and he sauntered slowly to the piazza, followed by the slave, leading the dogs, and not deigning to wipe the blood from his face.

"What's all this about, Henry?" asked the gentleman of his son.

Harry lifted his fair face with the air of a spoiled boy, and answered, "Why, you see, sir, the black scoundrel lamed my dog, and then denied it, and I was teaching him better — that is all."

"Your father, Henry," returned the gentleman in mild reproof, "never struck a slave in his life."

"Ah, sir," responded the boy, "but they are none the better for that. Mama don't believe in that mode of governing."

"Your mama, Henry, was a Northern lady, and knows but little of the best ways to control a slave; but we will not discuss the subject. What did you do, Chibby?"

"The black scoundrel knows well enough," interrupted Henry. The "black scoundrel," probably, because he considered the word of a "scoundrel" of no avail whatever, held his peace, and offered no word in his own defense.

As they stood together — the gallant, haughty master of La-Harpe and the poor slave boy, whose cheek was yet bleeding from a degrading chastisement — one could not fail to note the resemblance between them. There was the same grace of figure, the same noble cast of features, and the same haughty curl resting upon the lip of master and slave. Nature had set the seal of relationship upon their faces, which man would not ac-

knowledge. In her great book those two were written, not master and slave, but father and son, and the record could not by the art of any man be blotted out, so long as those two faces yet remained. Perhaps it was this thought that softened Col. Harper's tone and eye, as he spoke to the boy; perhaps it was the lad's heroic stoicism, or it may have been that in his heart of hearts this proud man, owner of a hundred slaves, softened by the "tender grace of a day that is dead," for the mother's sake, was gentle to the son.

"What have you to say, Chibby?"

"Nothing," was the reply.

"Nothing?" repeated the gentleman. "Why, Chib, you surely didn't lame your master's dog on purpose. How did you do it, or did you do it at all?"

"I told you, father, he did do it," broke in Henry's impatient voice. "You wouldn't take the slave's word against mine, sir, I hope."

"Be quiet, Henry. Chib, how did you do it?"

"Will you believe me, sir, if I tell you?" There was such a pleading, pitiable look in the questioner's dark eyes; such an earnest beseeching in his low questioning, that Colonel Harper replied instantly and kindly:

"Yes, Chibby, for I know you will not tell me an untruth."

"No, Mas'r, I wouldn't; but Mas'r Henry would not believe me, and I told him the truth. When I was feeding the dogs, a chicken tried to eat with them. Jupe threw a stone at the chicken, but it shied and hit the dog, and that's the truth, sir."

"I believe you, Chib, and I am sorry for what has happened. Go, now, wash that blood from your face. Henry, you were very wrong — do not be so hasty again. Chib, my boy, here is my hand. Be always honest and true."

The Colonel trembled when the timid hand of Chib touched his, then turned away, without addressing Henry again; passed into his library, and having closed the door, threw himself upon the lounge and hid his face in his hands.

Colonel Harper was not an old man, but his hair was perfectly white, and there were lines about his face which told of sorrow and of trials. He had not gathered the roses of life and escaped the sting of the bees hidden in their hearts. His mat-

ter-of-fact life had a little romance clinging to it, like ivy to a sturdy, rugged tree.

Seven and twenty years before, Colonel Harper had returned from college, the gayest, handsomest, noblest youth that ever was the idol of a fond old father or the admiration of a host of friends. He was generous, manly and impulsive, strong in his principles and immovable. A Northern college had in no degree altered his views of Southern life, and he returned to his old home as he had left it, a strong advocate for slavery. As he neared his home, the servants, dressed in their holiday attire, went to welcome him; ranged on either side of the carriage-way, with bared heads, they stood, forming a continual line of cheerful, careless faces, from the white haired men and decrepit old women, to the little toddling children, who joined their infant voices in the hearty "God bless young mas'r" which burst from the crowd.

The young man, always thoughtful and kind, bowed graciously as the carriage passed on, and when he sprang out at the broad piazza, followed by his father, the negroes crowded around him, calling out hearty welcomes and blessings on "young mas'r George." George shook hands with them, as they came about him, one after another, inquiring about this one's rheumatism and that one's palsy; having a kind word and a cheerful smile for all, and binding every heart to his own by the tender tie of love. Indeed, he had not been home a week before every heart on his father's plantation had learned to love "Young mas'r George."

Among the sea of dark faces which welcomed him home, George Harper saw one which he did not remember at all, the beautiful, languid face of a young quadroon girl, and it shone upon him like Venus in a cloudy sky. He had never before seen such tender, passionate beauty. It was dark and fiery, yet soft and gentle, like nothing so much as the radiant creation of some rare old artist, looking out from a time-darkened canvas. Clear and dark, as if illumined by some inner light, this face shone upon George Harper, and enchained him. He hurried from the eagerly offered hands of the other servants, and made his way at once to the beautiful face.

"Who is this, Mauma?" he asked of an old negress, who

had been laughing and crying in hysterical joy ever since his arrival.

"Ki, don't you know, Mas'r George? Hain't forgot de little t'ing ye used to hab sit on the piazza and sing for ye. Dat's Ninnie."

"Ninnie," ejaculated George, offering his hand at once. "Why, Ninnie, you were such a little creature when you used to sing me to sleep with that marvelous child-like voice. Can you sing yet, Ninnie?"

How good it was of him to remember her; how noble and thoughtful! Ninnie's heart beat tumultuously.

"See," she smiled, "I can sing for you, Mas'r."

How wonderfully that smile illumined her face. George thought instantly of the sunshine striking through rosy stalactites.

This scene passed before the Colonel, lying on the lounge, with his face in his hands. Then, like the moving picture of a panorama, it slowly gave place to another. How close it seemed to him; that delightful summer evening, when the scarlet honeysuckles breathed out their perfumes on the trellises; when the roses coyly opened their crimson hearts for the coming dew, and the whip-poor-will sang its mournful song. He was lying in his room with the low windows open, and Ninnie, sitting on the piazza, singing her evening song. As her sweet rich voice floated in on the still, perfumed air, George Harper smiled as though the notes caressed him like the touch of a loving hand. How distinctly he saw this quiet scene over again to-night, as though he were living it all over; how at his call her sweet song ceased, and she came in at the low French window, every motion full of languid Southern grace, and every feature aglow with her great love for him, her master, and he, the haughty owner of broad acres and a hundred slaves, the last of a noble family, was in love with the poor quadroon, whose only wealth was her rare beauty. She had stolen into his heart unawares, and rested there like a tired bird. How beautiful she was in her startled, timid grace, as she stood before him, listening to the low tones of his voice. Ah, so long as life lasted he could never forget her kneeling at his feet, folding her arms upon the lounge, and laying her graceful head upon them, never lifting her face as she answered him:

“Mas'r George, I belong to you, heart, and soul, and body. Sometime you will remember this, and know that I loved you even unto death.”

She was gone from his side. There was no more singing that night, and the honey-suckles, and roses, and whip-poor-wills had it all their own way.

How the scenes crowd upon one another, as though some invisible hand changed them quickly. This is the chamber of death, and George Harper's face pales as he thinks of it. Ninnie, lying with white face and trembling lips, withering like a tender flower under the frost touch of death. She had sent for George, and now for a moment all caste is forgotten. She clasps her hands about his neck as he bends over her, draws his face down to her own, and kisses it. Then her soft cheek sinks to his shoulder. She smiles an ineffably happy smile, and so dies. How perfectly he remembered her words then! She had “loved him even unto death.” What wonder, if for her child and his — left motherless before it could know a mother — there was a world of tenderness and kindness in his inmost heart?

Ten years after Colonel Harper married a young wife, and they had one son, Henry, but the boy who looked at him with Ninnie's eyes and spoke to him with Ninnie's voice, was dearer to him than the son who would inherit all his wealth. His quick Southern nature could not assimilate nor understand the cooler temperaments of his wife and son, though, with his chivalrous spirit which had descended to him with the ancestral acres and the ancestral sword, he revered and honored his wife, really considering her “the finest woman in the world.”

But, leaving Colonel Harper's dream, and Colonel Harper's little romance, we return to the evening when Mrs. Harper stood at the window of her parlor. The cool, sweet day had gone to rest; the lover-robin, in the midst of his love song, fell asleep beside his bride, tucking his wise little head in his feathery night-cap, and discreetly drawing his feet under the clothes. The whip-poor-will made its complaining moan in the old cedar, and the katy-dids tuned their hoarse little instruments in reply. The flowers shut their bright eyes for a little slumber, whereupon the sky fell to blossoming and spread

out an azure field, sprinkled with golden stars for buttercups; and the great sun went down into the ocean to take his evening bath, probably considering — as is the habit of great folks — that he would be the better appreciated for a brief absence.

At LaHarpe, the cold, fair lady left the window, as she had gone to it, ennuied. She had seen night come so often, after all it was the same thing over and over. She supposed the moon and the stars were always the same ones, kept through the day and exhibited at night, like the paraphernalia of the stage; and if the clouds were not the same ones, what difference did it make, since they all looked alike? The lady's maid tapped at the door to know "If missis would have her hair dressed?"

"No, missis would not have her hair dressed," and the maid departed.

Then the lady descended to the library. The door was closed. She opened it and entered. Her husband was lying still upon the lounge, his face hidden in his hands. On the table near by were scattered various papers. He had probably been writing, as the pen was still wet with ink.

"Are you ill, Colonel Harper?" asked the lady in her measured, polite tone. There was no answer. She advanced to his side, and slightly touched his arm. "Colonel Harper, tea will be ready in a few moments. Had you better not get up?"

When had ever the polite, chivalrous gentleman failed to answer his young wife before? When had a suggestion of hers been disregarded? Yet now he was speechless. His hand, at her touch, fell at his side, an inert thing, revealing a very pale face, and set, unconscious eyes.

She understood it all now — that settled gaze, those lax muscles, his inability to move. Colonel Harper was paralyzed.

The lady was never more composed in her very composed life. She rang the bell, and ordered one servant to go for the physician. Others she commanded, in a tone that rebuked their crying, to carry their master to his room.

Henry came in, nervously frightened, but she sent him to the tea-table, saying that she would join him in a few moments, which she did, leaving her husband comfortably lying in his own bed, tended by "Mauma" and Chibby.

The latter, having occasion to return to the library for a favorite pillow of his master's, ran down, possessed himself of the article, and was leaving the room, when his name, written upon a paper, caught his eye. He raised the paper, and led by curiosity, read it. It was written brokenly and in fragments, as though the mind of the writer, weakened by disease, had collected all its faculties for this one action before it gave way. The note read:

"Ninnie was my first and last love. Her memory is sweet to me. She loved me 'even unto death.' Chib must be free. I demand it of you all. He is Ninnie's son — looks like her. I desire to free him and will to-morrow. Geor."

Only those four letters of his name, and the tired hand had lost its cunning, the weary mind its activity.

Chib replaced the paper tremblingly, and went again to his master's room.

The doctor came and gave so little hope of the Colonel's recovery that none of the family retired.

Toward morning the sick man began to rally. His eyes roved from one object to another as though in search of something. "He wants something," said the physician, as the sick man's eyes settled on Chib's mournful face — "What is it?"

"Nothing," said Mrs. Harper, coldly, "he can want nothing of the boy."

But Chib understood that silent appeal.

"He used to hear me sing," he said, "that is what he wants. Let me try, please."

"Go on," said the doctor, and Chib's sweet, rich voice rose tremblingly through the tears, and flooded the apartment. It was an old, favorite hymn which he sang, and as the refrain rose and softly fell like the waves in a sea of melody, the dying man smiled, softly closed his eyes and fell asleep. As the stars went out from the sky and their light from out the sea, so calmly and gradually Colonel Harper's soul left its prison-house.

By and by the day dawned, the sun came out, the robins began their nest again, and the day was very like the other days gone before; but at LaHarpe a hundred hearts were filled with grief and terror, and a hundred voices joined in wailing.

After the funeral, Mrs. Harper became sole manager and

director on the plantation, and a very severe one she proved.

Henry, acting on his own individual instincts, "could whale a nigger and break him in with the best of 'em," as he often elegantly remarked to his mother, after giving her a specimen of his talents in that direction with Chib. as a victim.

"You should use more refined expressions, my son," would be her sole comment. "Your late father would never permit himself to use such language."

"I tell you, mother, it's deuced hard to be on the outlook for fine words, so, when you want to talk; and the fact of the matter is, that Colonel Harper's son is able to talk as he has a mind to;" which he generally did.

Chibby, in the agony of his grief, had almost forgotten the existence of the paper which he had read, until the first shock began to wear off. Then, he repaired to the library, but not a paper was to be seen. Mrs. Harper had been there before him. Had he seen her as she tore the paper into a dozen fragments, in her calm jealousy — so calm, but oh! so fierce — burning each separate fragment, and watching them shrivel in the blaze, with cruel eyes, as though she would have joyed to see the hand which penned them shriveling in their place, Chibby would never have dared to stake his future comfort on the desperate throw he did.

Henry resolutely refused to return to school at the close of the vacation, declaring that "it was deuced hard for a fellow turning fifteen to be sent to school like a child."

He ruled the house as he generally did; rode fast horses; kept fast hounds, and "broke in" fast negroes, to the full satisfaction of his lively and amiable disposition.

Poor Chib was the attendant of this young gentleman, and being really vexatious to a "fellow" of Henry's stamp, was perpetually incurring humiliating punishments, which stung his proud soul to the quick, and sent the Harper blood in a boiling flood through his veins. He had more of that than of his patient, loving mother's, and could not so well brook insults. He was the constant object of Henry's wrath and anathemas, boots, brushes, et cetera, were hurled at him a dozen times a day; but as these ebullitions made not the slightest difference in Chib's stoical actions, they but exasperated the young master the more. "You're mine," he said on one of these occasions,

through his clenched teeth, "mine, body and soul, and by the Lord, sir, I'll burn you alive, if you don't mend your ways."

"You don't dare," said Chib, speaking impulsively and thoughtlessly in his hot anger, "I'll run away."

"You will, will you?" cried Henry, in his insulting tone; "you will! Well I'm glad you've given me warning. I'll prevent that, my fine young fellow, in short order. You'll be dead before you ever get from under my thumb."

Aware of his mistake, too late for its retraction, Chibby made his resolve. For him to resolve was to act. He had been taught reading by Colonel Harper, that he might commit favorite songs for his master's pleasure, and besides, had succeeded in smuggling the papers frequently enough for him to understand the general situation of the adverse armies. He knew that escape would be almost impossible, as the armies had not yet penetrated to the interior of the States. He would, therefore, tell his mistress of the paper he had read, and plead for his freedom. Accordingly, that evening he tapped timidly at his mistress' parlor door. Mrs. Harper raised her eyes slightly, and resumed her reading.

"Please, missis," he ventured.

Perhaps she was gracious to-night; perhaps it pleased her fancy to have that handsome face opposite her own with that pleading look. At all events, she raised her eyes to his face in her calm, cold way, and said, "Well."

It was very hard to go on with that dry, sharp word cutting his sentences, but he again began, and went on:

"You know, missis, the night mas'r was taken sick, I waited on him. Well, I went down to the library for his pillow — he always liked that pillow best —"

"Go back to your subject," commenced the lady.

The slave bowed and went on: "There was a lamp by the table, and some papers by it."

"Well?" This time full of impatience and inquiry.

The slave lowered his voice and continued: "I never did so mean an act before, but I couldn't help this, missis, no more than I could help breathing."

The lady's slender foot came down hard upon the carpet. "Will you go on?" she commanded under her breath.

"Yes, Missis, I saw my name on one of the papers, I took it up and read it, and the ink was not dry on it. It was the last thing Mas'r ever wrote. It said that he loved my mother, and that I was to be free — and oh, dear! Missis, some one has taken the paper from the table, but I'll swear that it read just so."

Mrs. Harper had flushed and paled during the relation, but now she spoke in her usual calm, icy tone: "What does all this folly amount to?"

Chibby hesitated. He did not know how to face the haughty lady, who designated his strongest claim for the favor he was going to ask, as "folly," but he manfully choked back the great sobs which were rising in his throat and pleaded:

"Oh, Missis, won't you give me what Mas'r promised? Please, please — my freedom. The paper said I was to be free."

The lady touched her bell and said to the maid who instantly replied: "Send Smith to me." Then she again turned to Chibby: "This story is a very strange one," said she, "and I cannot credit it at all. Even if it were true (which I doubt) you merit severe punishment for meddling with your Master's papers. You have either been guilty of telling your mistress a falsehood, or of reading papers which you had no right to touch."

"Smith, Missis," interrupted the maid, as a short, stout, cruel-faced man entered the room, bowing.

"Smith, you will take Chib and give him twenty lashes for falsehood."

The poor octoroon recoiled with a low, bitter cry: "O, no, Missis, not that! On my knees I pray you, not that!"

Vain was that earnest, pleading prayer. As well might he plead to that marble Flora, standing near. His mistress only waved her white hand and repeated:

"You hear me, Smith. Let the people know that it was for falsehood. It will be an example for them."

With his proud heart crushed and broken, Chib followed the insolent overseer from the room. An hour after Henry repeated the threat of running away, and proposed as a safeguard that Chib be branded. The day following while he was

yet suffering from those cruel strokes, he was branded on the palm of his hand with the fiery letters "L. H." and the iron entered his soul.

"I will not bear this from my younger brother," Chib said again and again between clenched teeth. "I will not be treated like a dog by him. He will madden me until I forget myself and kill him, as I surely will;" and he turned the thought over and over in his angry heart, until it was fixed there as incredibly as the letters on his hand.

Thinking these thoughts Chib became unmanageable. He was quick to resent a blow, quick to disobey a command, and so it came he was no stranger to the lash, to confinement and to hunger. Henry was his sole master. Beyond him there was no appeal, and his spirit could ill brook the insolent temper of the slave. Poor Chib learned now of the terrors of slavery. His master's dogs were far better cared for than he was, the elder brother. In all the broad world there was no loving hand to lift him above his grosser self, to teach him patience under his afflictions and to look to a higher help than that of man. He grew sullen and insolent, and finally flatly refused obedience to his master's command.

Among the slaves there was one who had stood Chib's firm friend in all his troubles. He had smuggled food to him when he was confined, and had often stolen to the barn at midnight to wash his wounds and bind them for him. There is little that one slave can do for another, but that little Jim did, time and again, for Chibby.

Henry, knowing somewhat of the bond between them, for some slight misdemeanor, commanded Chib to flog Jim, and Chib, setting his teeth together, said firmly:

"Never, though you kill me, Mas'r."

With a muttered oath, Henry seized the whip and laid it over Chib's shoulders, but the latter was immovable. He would have died and made no sign.

"Flog me, Chib," pitifully begged Jim. "Do — ye can, an' dey'll kill ye if ye don't!" But Chib did not hear him.

Henry tossed the whip to Smith and commanded, "Break them in, Smith," and then walked away, whistling to cool his anger.

For many days after this, Chib was unable to resume his duties; but when at last he did, he was no longer the handsome, high-spirited man, but a quiet, broken-down slave. No temptations could force from him an angry word, no blows produce the slightest perceptible impression on him. He went about meekly, doing his work, and was, as Henry exultingly declared to his mother, "the best broke creature in the place." To a more practised eye, this perfect metamorphosis of the octoroon's nature and disposition would have been something more to be feared than enjoyed. There was a baleful glitter of his eye, occasionally, which boded no good to his tormentors.

Mrs. Harper was particularly irritating, in her lady-like, icy manner, and her despotic rule. Chib bore it, as he did everything else, stoically, but once or twice he raised his hand, and his lips moved as though he were calling down anathemas upon her graceful head. As the days passed and Chib retained his meek, obedient habits, Mrs. Harper and Henry relaxed their vigilance somewhat, and he was free to put in operation his long cherished plan.

One evening toward the last of October, while Mrs. Harper was sitting by her lamp, reading, preparatory to retiring for the night, she was suddenly grasped, her head bent back, and a gag inserted in her mouth; her hands were quickly seized, and stoutly tied to the chair on which she sat. In this uncomfortable position, outcry or motion was impossible; but her captor was evidently desirous of gratifying her very natural curiosity. He stepped from behind her and contemptuously looked at her, bound and helpless, lifting to her astonished eyes the handsome face of Chibby.

"I could not go," he said at length, "without in some measure allowing you to suffer what you inflict upon others. By morning you will probably be rather weary, but upon the whole you get off rather easily. I leave you my blessing, remembering you are constantly in my prayers, so long as I may live. By this branded hand"—lifting the scarred member and speaking in a low concentrated voice that made his hearer shudder—"by the scars upon my back, by the weary, weary hours of my punishment, and by all the laws of justice, may God deal with you according to your deserts."

The burning black eyes left her face; the speaker made an ironical bow, and Mrs. Harper, bound and gagged, kept silent watch in the solitude of her chamber.

It had been a rainy, disagreeable day, and a wet November breeze was chilling all the hosts of our encamped army; but little cared they for rain or wind. Plymouth had added its name to the glorious record of Union victories, and the men were in high spirits. Along the narrow streets formed by tents on either side, the blue-coats were scattered plentifully, and singing and shouting and amusements were the order of the hour. Here a crowd was collected about a smooth hickory pole, which one after another essayed to climb, arrived midway toward the top, and just as surely unable to advance, slid down, amid the laughter and good-natured cheers of his comrades; then another crowd were initiating some raw recruits into the "Sons of Malta" order, by means of a blind, a wet blanket and canteen of water. In another part of the encampment, by a huge fire, the boys were busy telling stories and cracking jokes, spreading their damp clothes to the genial warmth, and utterly regardless of the misty rain still falling.

All these amusements gave way to a general stare of curiosity as the guards, who had been on picket duty, entered the narrow little street, bringing between them a young man with great black eyes and thin, gaunt face. He staggered from weakness, and sank wearily to a seat by the fire, which one of the boys politely offered him.

"I'll get you something to eat," said one of the guards; "you look as lean as a wolf. He's a contraband," further explained the guards to the soldiers, "came in this afternoon; has been eating ever since, and is as hungry as a bear now, poor fellow!"

Poor fellow, indeed! He ate voraciously all they brought him, and then looked wistfully for more, spreading his thin, scarred hands to the flames, and beginning to warm into the semblance of humanity.

"He is branded — a slave," whispered one soldier to another.

The young man heard the whisper, looked steadily at the branded hand for a moment then said slowly: "Yes, a slave,

I have known hunger and cold, and labor; been beaten like a dog, and branded like a felon. I have lain night after night in agony, without so much as a cup of cold water to cool my lips. I am not twenty-six yet, but I have known life to be a curse to me. It is a little better now. It cursed my mother, and her mother before her. Why should it not curse me?"

The crowd about the smooth pole deferred their trial of skill, and the initiators of the "Sons of Malta order," declaring their recruits initiated fully, all gathered around the crowd at the fires.

"Let's hear your story,"—"Come—tell your tale,"—"Hurry up, my boy," and such requests and commands, greeted the newcomer, so that he seemed utterly at a loss where to begin.

"What's your name? Tell us that," asked a small boy, in a great coat.

"Chib," was the reply.

"He's wet to the skin," cried a third. "I've an old suit you may have, if you'll come to my tent."

Chib shook his head. "Mine will soon dry. I'm used to it, anyhow. It don't make any sort of difference. I've slept in the driest corners of the swamp, and waded up to my waist in water, before now. I'm used to it."

"Your story—your story," called out impatient voices, and Chib, beginning, told all in a few words all I have told; then, breaking off silently, he turned his face to the fire, as though he had forgotten himself and his surroundings.

"How did you get off? Go on," urged an impatient voice.

Chib raised his fine dark eyes and continued. "That was the best part of my life. After that I was Mas'r Henry's slave; I was beaten, and kicked and cuffed, and being high-strung, I would break out now and then, although it made it the worse for me. Mas'r wanted me to flog a friend—the best one I had—and when I wouldn't, he had me flogged so bad that it was near a week before I could rise from the barn floor. The poor men used to feed me in the night, there. At last, as I was about my work, I made up my mind to escape. I was very meek and obedient, and Mas'r Henry said I was 'broke in';

but when he least expected it, I made off, leaving mistress my hearty blessing." Here a humorous twinkle in Chibby's eyes belied the words. "I knew the Yankee army was somewhere hereabouts, and I stole Mas'r Henry's papers often enough to get the run. Well, I ran, but before I had many hours' start some of them informed on me, and the overseer, with the niggers and the dogs, were after me." The octoroon rose in his excitement, and stood towering over his listeners, his dark, passionate features glowing in the ruddy firelight. So perfectly quiet were his auditors, that you could have heard a pin drop.

"Yes," he said, in a low, intense voice of deep excitement, "I was tracked with hounds like a brute, and I could hear their sharp yelps, and cries of the human devils, as they gained on me. The very dogs that I had fed since they were little pups, now were barking and whining for my heart's blood. I tell you, it was hard! All the demon in my nature rose when I saw them coming. I took refuge in a kind of marsh that I knew well. In the center of it, under the tall grass and weeds, I had once placed a kind of raft, and found that it was drier there than elsewhere."

"As the dogs brought on the yelling hunters, I took to this swamp. I was armed with Mas'r George's pistol, and a long bowie knife, and as the dogs came nearer and nearer, I stood at bay with a drawn knife. One of the dogs, leaping lightly through the damp grass, made a spring at my throat. I plunged the knife into his throat, and he fell backward. Then Ponto, my pretty pet, who had always been my chief care, followed. On she came, closer and closer, pressing forward in her eagerness to catch the prey; but even then she remembered her old master, and crouched down at my feet, licking them with a low cry of delight.

"Another moment, and the cries of the overseer would urge her to her duty, and she would forget the hand that fed her. I knew well, the oaths and cries of that yelling pack would arouse her old instincts. She was crouching at my feet, licking the hand that must slay her."

Poor Chib paused with a great sob, and the soldiers gathered around him had many of them turned moist eyes from

him. Checking the sob as unmanly, but with a voice that would falter, the narrator continued: "Poor Ponto! She was the most loving creature. It was the hardest thing I ever did, and when she fell from my murderous knife, lifting her glazing eyes so reproachfully to mine, I felt as though I were a murderer; but my pursuers were hard upon me. They were afraid to venture upon the swamp, and were hesitating. I could hear them debating and finally resolving to try it. I discharged my pistol at the foremost among them, and sinking down, crawled on my hands and knees to the raft, where I lay in trembling fear, wet and weary.

"Fortunately for me, a heavy storm was brewing, and it was already growing dark. Lightnings began to flash and the rain to fall. The whole pack dashed past me so closely I could hear the overseer say: 'We'll give him up to-day, but we're sure to catch him to-morrow.'

"All that night I travelled, and laid in hiding the next day. I had what food I could find on the way. I was often hungry, and often cold, and sometimes was tempted to lie down and die; but I persevered, and after six dreadful days and nights, I am here. Mas'r George has 'listed in the Rebel army, and I want to 'list in this. I will fight for freedom and justice to the last drop of blood."

Chibby sat down, and for a second no one spoke. Then a soldier standing near the boy, proposed "Three cheers for our brave recruit!" and the still air trembled with the shouts as they rose and fell, then rose again, like the ebb and flow of a mighty tide of sound; and from that hour, when he was welcomed with cheers and kindness, the poor slave Chibby was a favorite.

He enlisted in a colored regiment, and was so bright, and daring and intrepid, that he was soon the admiration of the officers and the men. Where danger was most imminent, there was Chibby; from the foremost lines of battle shone his handsome face, like a star, leading on to victory. He served nobly in several engagements. He ever petitioned to be placed in the front ranks; and yet his eager eyes ever seemed searching the ranks of the enemy for a familiar face, and ever turning from such search with a patient look in their depths, as though he would "bide his time."

"Chib," questioned his Captain one day, "whom are you looking for?"

"Captain," returned the boy, "I am looking for a man I mean to kill."

"I look at them all that way," was the reply, and Chibby returned to his search.

Every battlefield, and wounded prisoner were noted by his indefatigable eyes, but for a time in vain.

At last his search was rewarded. A great battle had been fought, the rebels had fled, and Chibby, as usual the first in daring, led the pursuit. Passing over the bloody field, the white face and golden hair of a boy lying like a crushed daisy among the bleeding, mangled bodies, caught his eye.

"We have met at last, Henry Harper!" he hissed between his clenched teeth. "I have sworn to kill you!"

The boy opened his blue eyes faintly, and Chibby saw that his side was bleeding. He could not deal to this boy the death blow. Back to himself came the prayer which he had used as a curse to his mistress, "May God deal with you according to your deserts," and the revengeful light died out of his eyes.

He bent over the prostrate form and began eagerly staunching the blood with his own clothes.

Henry smiled once and feebly offered his hand, and breathed out:

"Chibby, forgive — forgive."

Only for a moment he hesitated, and then said: "May God forgive you as I do, Mas'r Henry;" adding softly, "My poor young brother, as I forgive you may I be forgiven."

Closer to the dying boy he bent and took the offered hand, holding it in a firm, brotherly clasp, and joyfully catching the reflection of his quiet smile in his own noble face.

What was that whizzing sharply through the air? Only the wings of the Angel of Death, as he passed over the field on his terrible mission. Ah! one of the fatal mistakes so often made has borne its fruits. A bullet from a friendly hand has struck home to the brain of Chibby, as he bends, and they lie together — Master and Man, Brother and Brother — at rest.

Through the gloomy portals of the grave, the poor slave has reached at last eternal freedom; from the harsh severity of

an earthly master, he has gone to the tender mercy of a Heavenly One. His noble, tortured soul had burst its prison bars at last! He was free — free —

“And his lifeless body lay,
A worn-out fetter, which the soul
Had broke and thrown away.”

Tuesday, July 4, 1865.

THE JOKE TURNED

“Miss Lettie Roping,
She still is hoping,
That she'll catch a beau-o-o;
Wants to get married
But too long has tarried,
It can't be, you know-o-o!”

sang Dick Taylor, impromptu, perched upon Widow Roping's gate. He was vociferously cheered by ten or twenty little rascals as full of mischief as himself; and when Lettie Roping took up her work and left the window, with a flushed face, they gave a “tiger” with a savage enjoyment more becoming to real denizens of the forest than to these “fathers of men.”

I suppose there never was a more audaciously mischievous boy than Dick Taylor. He had all the cats and dogs in the neighborhood in perpetual fear of him. One old feline, in particular, always ran up a tree, and clung there, growling and spitting, the moment she caught sight of Dick's hat as he turned the street corner. That he eventually would be hanged was the best hope Trentown had; that he must grow up before he could thus be disposed of was its greatest grief.

Could Trentown endure until then? Would there be a pane of glass unbroken, a bell-wire whole, a door not dilapidated, a dog living, or a cat unmolested at the end of that time? Trentown remembered the past two years, and feared not.

That Dick Taylor had some good points I suppose must be admitted, since all children are supposed to have some cherubic traces left in them until they attain manhood; but these traits Trentown couldn't discover. He was ringleader in every mis-

chief, idolized and obeyed by all the village-boys as a master-spirit is sure to be, and the greatest little despot living. To them he was a king, a genius, a brick. Who but he could have composed that witty song of "Lettie Roping"? (They thought it was witty.) Who but he could have sung it in so clear a voice, and with such comical gestures? And now, as he put his hands in his pockets, and doubled himself over them in a perfect paroxysm of laughter, every boy of them joined in his merriment, though they had no more idea where the joke came in than the Emperor of the French.

"Ha, ha! Ho, ho!" roared Dick. "Ha, ha," echoed his worshippers. Suddenly he sprang up, turned a complete somersault, and alighted on the top rail of the gate on his feet. At this proof of agility he was cheered again; but he held up his dirty fat little hands, and cried with mock solemnity:

"Men and brethren — silence there! It behooves us as president of this most august and solemn society to allow no time to elapse before carrying into execution an important thought which has occurred to us. The audience will therefore please adjourn to Funny Hall immediately."

At this, shouting and laughing, the whole crew, headed by Dick, dashed down the street to Funny Hall. This "Hall" was the rendezvous of these choice spirits. It was the loft of Dick's father's barn, and had been fitted up according to that young man's own ideas of comfort. (Dick's ideas!) Here were his pistols, and flags, and tools, and nine-pins — here everything that the only son of a wealthy foolish father would be likely to have. As the boys trooped in, Dick at once assumed the easy chair back of the writing-desk, "The gentlemen will seat themselves without disorder," he said gravely, frowning upon one member who dared to laugh behind his hand. The boys crowded in and took such seats as they could find. Then Dick remarked, standing on his desk for greater height:

"Men and brethren, we are here assembled this afternoon to consult on the lamentable state of society. As you know, the last cat has had her last tooth extracted, the last dog has been disposed of. The cholera will be upon us, for longfacedness prevails. We must avert this calamity. I have, therefore, to consult you upon a fitting sequel to our very tender, and, I

may say, becoming serenade to the maiden-lady of Trentown."

"Go it, old boy!" "Let's hear!" "Hurrah!" "We'll stand by you," etc., from different parts of the room.

Dick bowed, and wiped his eyes on his coat-sleeve.

"You're fine fellows," he sniffled. "Your affection subdues me. Men and brethren, I'm touched. My tears gush forth. David Ketchum, will you administer the oath of secrecy to the brethren here assembled?"

David took up a dog-eared spelling book; and, one by one, the boys laying their hands upon it, swore themselves to secrecy and mutual support.

"And not peach?" said Dick.

"And not peach," they swore.

"Now, hark ye, boys!" said Dick, threateningly, as the book was laid down, baring his fat, brawny arm, "is that an arm to be walked over? There's to be no peaching. The first fellow that I catch at that business I'll wallop within an inch of his life, I will. Now," changing his tone to a softer one, "wait ten minutes, boys, if you please."

Dick sat down at his desk, and indited three notes, then, with the paper in his hand, he arose.

"Dear brethren and fellow-creatures, you must all acknowledge that it's time the Roping saw something of matrimony. Well, it occurred to me this morning that we'd give her a bird's-eye view of it, for it's all she'll ever see, poor thing. (Laughter.) You'll acknowledge, too, that George Todd ought to see his share. He's forty, if he's a day. We'll let him look, too — just a sight, you know. They'll want witnesses. We'll have all the hunchbacks in town at the church — four nice witnesses they'll be. It's time our much-esteemed Rector had some marrying to do. We'll give him, at least, the hope of a fee, which may turn out to be a feeble hope. (Laughter, and cries of "Go to it, old boy!") Now, boys, I'll read the notes:

" 'Rectory, Nov. 4, 18—.

" 'Dear Miss Lettie:— You will very much oblige me by meeting several of the ladies at the church this evening, at seven o'clock, to consult on business of importance. Yours truly,
" 'OLIVER DALE, Rector of St. Paul's.'

“Pass that around, Jim.”

The note was passed from hand to hand. The penmanship was very like Mr. Dale’s.

“Now, again, Mr. Dale, you perceive, gentlemen, is fond of writing little notes. He has written one precisely similar to George Todd, so I will not read that. Now for the third. This, you perceive, is in Mr. Todd’s well-known masculine round hand.” (A perfect shout of laughter; for Mr. Todd wrote a little cramped hand very like a young schoolgirl’s.) Silence!

“ ‘Trenton, Nov. 4, 18—

“ ‘Mr. Dale, D.D.—Dear Sir:—I have at last resolved to enter the bonds-matrimonial, and, if you could find it convenient, should like to be married, from the church, at seven o’clock this evening. Miss Lettie Roping is my bride-elect. We desire the affair to be as private as possible. Yours truly,

“ ‘GEORGE TODD.’

“How’s that?”

This note also was heard and approved amid shouts of laughter, and then Dick commanded silence.

“We’ll send notes like Roping’s to each of the hunchbacks, and then look out for sport. I’ve a notion that we’ll take a bird’s-eye view of matrimony from the left-hand gallery about that time. I’ll send the notes at once. Brethren, the meeting is gone out.”

That Lettie Roping wanted to get married was probably true; since every woman who has arrived at the age of thirty, and never had an offer, naturally feels uneasy as regards the future. It was not her aim in life. If some man whom she loved had asked her to walk the long path with him, she would have been happy; but since such had not come, she kept her face in sunshine for her widowed mother. She was a good girl, and rather pretty, full of tender, gentle ways, and sweet womanliness, but very shy and bashful. This probably, explained the fact of her being an old-maid; for no one could know Lettie Roping and not love her. She had not an enemy in the world, unless Dick Taylor and his crew, who all liked Lettie but fun better, might be so considered; and there was not a girl in Trenton

more highly esteemed. She was a good daughter, and a conscientious church-member.

To a clinging nature like hers, which reaches up to love as naturally as grapes to sunshine, the thought of dying unloving and unloved must have been painful; but of this Lettie gave no sign. She had one visitor — George Todd. At precisely seven o'clock every Tuesday evening, George was at the door. When she opened it, he always bowed, and remarked he'd been walking fast and his face was red. "Mother well, Lettie?" he would add. "Quite well, George. Come in, won't you?" Thus invited, George would enter, take a chair opposite Lettie, and watch the quick needle in Lettie's fingers flashing in and out of her work, saying little, but with a quiet content on his face, which was better than words. As the clock struck ten he invariably arose, with the remark that he must be going; and, after leaving his "Good-by, Lettie! Give my regards to your mother!" she would hear no more of him until next Tuesday even at seven o'clock.

George was a good man. He was quick and earnest in business, and showed none of the awkward bashfulness among men which he so constantly exhibited to Lettie Roping. He had made for himself a fortune, and kept bachelor's hall in the handsomest house in Trenton. But George was bashful. He had arrived at the age of forty, and had never as yet summoned courage to meet ladies as he did gentlemen — with a perfect consciousness of equality. These were the parties so cruelly included in Dick Taylor's joke.

"Mother," said Lettie Roping that same evening, smoothing down the folds of her neat brown merino, "Mr. Dale wants me at the church at seven; so I guess I'll go round a minute."

"What does he want, Lettie?" asked the old lady.

"I can't imagine, I'm sure. Some church-business, though. I'll tell you when I come back. Good-by, mother."

Lettie kissed her mother, and took her way to the church. It was already lighted and warmed. She entered the vestibule, saying to herself that she must be late; but, on looking into the church, she altered her mind, since she saw a little group standing by the altar. She went in. George Todd and four hunchbacks were all in the group. Just then Mr. Dale, in his

gown, came out from the dressing-room, and knelt in silent prayer. There was a slight noise as of laughter in the gallery as Mr. Dale, book in hand, came forward to the chancel-railing.

"What do you want of us, Mr. Dale?" asked George Todd, astonished at the proceedings.

Mr. Dale smiled in spite of himself. Had that man come there to be married, brought four hunchbacks as witnesses, and then must he ask Mr. Dale what he wanted of him? He thought that George Todd's bashfulness had gotten the better of his common-sense.

"Let the couple to be united come forward," he said.

"What couple?" asked George, satisfied that he being the only man present, must be included in the "couple."

Mr. Dale was puzzled. There was suppressed giggling in the gallery.

"Did you not write me a note this morning, Mr. Todd, saying that you desired to be married to Miss Lettie Roping at seven this evening?"

A light began to dawn on George. He passed a note to Mr. Dale.

"Did you write that, sir?"

Mr. Dale read it twice.

"I never did!" he returned, in an astonished tone. "I never did!"

"Why are we here?" demanded one of the hunchbacks.

"Mr. Dale, what do you want of us?"

"Why, why," ejaculated the Rector, "that's the oddest thing! Mr. Todd, didn't you mean to marry Miss Roping?"

"I—I hadn't thought of it, Sir!" said George, coloring to the roots of his hair.

"The note said we were to be witnesses," said one of the hunchbacks; "and you've brought us here to be laughed at. That's what you've done."

There was more than a giggle in the gallery now, and George understood plainly the drift of the joke. He looked over at Lettie. She had turned away from them, standing with her flushed face hidden in her hands. Even her throat was flushed, and he could see her trembling as she stood. He understood her shy sensitiveness, and all his manhood protested against her

having the cruel burden of this joke to bear. That it would meet her at every turn, he knew; that it would almost break her heart, he was equally certain. At this thought all timidity left him. He would save her if he could. He crossed over to where she stood, and said gently, without a tremor in his voice:

"Lettie, this is a cruel joke; but we have known each other for a long time, and why should we not turn it? I have loved you for a long time, Lettie, and will do so to the end. Mr. Dale is here, and the witnesses are here. Will you be my wife now, Lettie?"

She took her hands from her face, and asked:

"Do you ask me that because you think that I am not able to bear up under this joke?"

"No; though that will be hard, I ask you because I love you, Lettie, and would begin shielding you from this moment forward. Come, Lettie my love! my love!"

Silently, Lettie allowed him to lead her to the altar.

"Proceed with the service!" said George to Mr. Dale.

They knelt quietly for a moment, and then Mr. Dale's solemn voice broke the stillness.

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here, in the sight of God, and in the face of this company, to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony." And so on through the service.

Then the prayer silently arose, hushing every heart. One by one, the boys in the gallery stole out on tip-toe; and when Mr. Dale raised his head to congratulate the newly wedded pair the gallery was empty.

"Come, friends!" said George to the hunchbacks; "and you too, Mr. Dale. We will go to Lettie's mother's, and have a pleasant finishing of the happiest joke in which I ever participated. No refusal. You must go!" And go they did.

When the company reached Widow Roping's house, they found upon the steps a great white wedding cake, and on it a card: "From the jokers."

The four witnesses, after all, had been most pained by the joke, since their particular infirmities had been so cruelly shown up; but even this pain was assuaged by the widow's good cheer and the happy couple's genial kindness. And they had a gay

time that night, though the great cake suffered in consequence, since they vented on it their anger against the givers. Of course, Dick Taylor, and his crew must get up a concert, in which all the pans, kettles, cats, and bones in the town were actively employed; and great was the clatter, and mewing, and rattling thereof; but suddenly there was a lull, and Dick's clear, boyish voice sang out:

“O happy pair! Ye brave and fair!
We wish you joy completest!
We won't deny your suit was sly —
Our joke was turned the neatest.
But if you please, on bended knees,
We beg your grace for singing.
Right glad are we this joy to see
From such a bad beginning.”

Then the chorus was taken up by the whole crowd, and given with a will:

“Hurrah for the bride! Hurrah! Hurrah!
Three cheers for the bridegroom's wit!
Hurrah for the jokes that have proved such a hoax!
And yet, after all, have hit!
Hurrah! hurrah! for groom and bride!
And dean and witnesses beside!”

And then accompanied by the full orchestra of pans, kettles, and cats — the latter under Dick Taylor's skillful hands — the youthful band of serenaders moved on, leaving the Widow Roping's house in comparative quietness and superlative happiness.

For the *New York Mercury*, December 23, 1865.

A VISION AND ITS LESSON

It was Christmas Eve. Already the old town-clock had struck eleven strokes, and the “hour of fairy ban and spell” came on apace. Without, the calm moon smiled upon the almost deserted streets, and through the silence I could almost fancy that I heard the silver tinkling of the bells, as Santa Claus drove his nimble-footed little team over the house-tops on his errand of joy; within, beside the cradle of my darling

I kept silent solemn watch. The warm, bright tints of carpets and curtains gleamed cheerily in the rosy glow of the firelight, and the gas, half head, made twilight in the room, and filled the farthest corners with changing shadowy spirits, which danced their weird dance upon the wall and ceiling. But all this comfort I did not heed. I had been a watcher for many nights beside that tiny crib, and tired Nature was claiming a respite. The soft billows of heat which flowed from the glowing coals, were very apt to bear one unconsciously onward to the sweet river of sleep; but my strong mother-love battled valiantly with Nature, and kept guard over the child struggling silently for its life in that death-like sleep.

I gazed at the beautiful face as it lay before me, and to my partial eyes no scene could be so beautiful. My baby, my love, my idol. If he should die My rebellious heart rose blindly at the thought, and fought against its Maker. "Not that, O Lord; not that," I cried in agony. "Spare my boy, my darling. Let this cup pass from me. The child shall not die." I bent over my child. His face was flushed with fever, and his bright lip was curled in pain. As I looked, his lips quivered. Fearful of awaking him, I sank back to my chair, and so to my knees, praying for his life, demanding of God the soul which he seemed calling to himself. As I prayed, a soft, mellow light shone around my baby's crib; and from its heart I saw a figure, calm and majestic, with a soft halo about its head, appear. It came toward me, and I saw then that its face was as the face of an angel. The calm eyes looked with a pitiful reproach into mine, and yet the sad lips smiled upon me. He was clad in a loose, flowing robe of dark blue, and his hair, parted after the Eastern fashion, from the middle, waved softly to his shoulders. In his presence the fierce tumult in my heart sank silently into quiet. It was as though a Master-spirit had claimed and exercised his power. As the rough waves of Galilee smoothed their angry billows at the commanding voice of God, so a silent "Peace for thee," seemed spoken to my surging heart, and immediately "there was a great calm."

My strange visitor, with that holy calm upon his face, stood beside my child, and as he spoke, his hand was laid upon its heart.

"You would have this child's life?" he questioned, in a soft, melodious voice. "Are you willing to bear the suffering which this child's life may bring you! O woman! Let not your mother's heart make you rebellious to your Master."

I stood silently before his rebuke, but my heart could not bow to God's decree, and I cried: "Save his life. O Lord! save but his life and I will bear even unto death."

Slowly he raised his hand — before me the room slowly opened, and I saw a room, dark, and cold, and cheerless. The crushing hand of poverty seemed to have fallen heavily there. Cowering over the fast-dying embers, I saw myself holding my child. Ah, the agony upon the face of that shadow of myself; the pinched, haggard face of my idol, and his wailing cry of hunger, struck terror to my heart. That scene told of sufferings, and a life of trial, but — I smiled as I looked — my child was there and alive. As I looked, the scene changed — a more comfortable room, lighted by tapers, was before me, and again I saw myself and my child. He was standing on the floor, his baby-face flushed and distorted by passion, his tiny hands clenched, and his slippered foot set upon the neck of a white dove, which had been his pet, and had some way offended him. I turned, shuddering from my beautiful child, and from that image of myself vainly trying to soothe him.

"Are not the hands of his Savior better to guide the babe?" asked the stranger, slowly.

Before I could reply, the ever-changing scenes shifted, and I saw another picture of my boy.

He was in a schoolroom. There were many children, and among them all my boy was the most beautiful. He was standing alone, and on his face I noticed a cruel delight as he watched the painful flutterings of a butterfly which he was torturing. That look upon his face, the soft baby-face, shadowed by drooping, golden curls, made my fearful heart tremble. He held the insect impaled, and laughed to see its fluttering agony. I turned away.

"Look!" said the strange man at my side. "Look!" and, because unable to resist, I turned again to the scene.

It was a small, cozy room, lighted by a night-lamp. The small clock on the mantle held its silent finger on the hour of

midnight; but the figure entering with a stealthy tread, drew all my attention. This had lost its shadow of curls, its dimpled rosiness of infancy, but still I knew my boy, the babe whose life I had demanded of God. He had grown to youth, and there was a look in his eyes of having drained life's pleasures to the dregs. I grieved to see that his lip had lost its innocent, full curve, in a curl of scorn, and that his face wore a look of having sinned.

He came forward now, cautiously stopped, listened, then advanced. His hand was on my desk. He turned the key. With a stifled cry my heart sprang up. My boy was a thief. Silently, he passed from the scene with a roll of bills in his hand; silently the darkened room lengthened and brightened until it lay before me a gorgeous saloon, bright with lights and rich tints; merry with the sound of men's voices and the clink of glasses.

Again I saw my boy. There were men old in life and crime, and youths just standing on the brink of manhood. There were gamblers with the exultation of success lighting their dark faces; and men in silent agony bending over the boards, staking their all of life, their hopes of Heaven, on the single throw of a card; but among them all I saw my boy. He had staked the money; and I knew by the dead whiteness of his face and the close clenching of his hands that on that card his soul was staked.

Bending forward, I watched the game. It went on. My boy's face lightened. Another moment and he staggered out into the silent night, a beggar. The scene slowly faded into a silent road, over which the stars kept watch. My boy with a desperate look on his young face, bared his brow to the cool soothing air. His face was relaxing, when suddenly I saw it harden again. The man who had won the game was before him. A moment more, and a sharp report rang on the air. And I — O God! my child was a murderer!

I turned away with a pitiful shudder; but the stranger at my side commanded:

“Look! look!”

The silent road and calm cold stars were gone. In their place I saw a court room, densely crowded. Now the people

were gathered to see a man fight for his life with the cruel law, as they had once done in haughty Rome, when gladiators strove with beasts.

I saw their curious, interested faces, and noted a few sympathetic ones; but my heart and my eyes, and life, clung to that handsome pale, boyish face in the criminal's box. It was the face of the baby I had rocked to sleep on my bosom — the face of the child I had forbidden God to take. Oh, how my heart ached now! How it prayed for pardon when its idol was arraigned before men as a criminal. The evidence had been given. A low murmur passed through the assembly. The verdict was ready. It was given, and my boy was a murderer in the first degree.

Slowly now the courtroom faded with its buzzing mass of humanity. The tragedy was adjourned. The curtain slowly rose on the fifth act; and I knew that for me life's cup of sorrow was filled to overflowing. In the distance I saw a scaffold loom up above the heads of thousands, there waiting the finale of this play of life.

I would fain have turned from the scene, or closed my eyes; but, held by a power mightier than my own, I could not move. The crown of thorns was offered to me, and I must wear it. The cup of gall was held to me, and I must drink it:

"Though the trembling lips shall shrink,
White with anguish as they drink,
And the forehead sweat with pain
Drops of blood like purple rain."

Above the heads of the crowd I saw the calm face of my boy, stilled and awful with the shadow of the coming death, penitent and softened with the thought of the coming judgment. I saw no more. My mother-heart broke then, and I sank to my knees, praying of a merciful God to smite my boy before the fierce hands of his human executioners should mar the beauty of his face. I had now no plea for his innocent life, but a prayer that his guilty soul might be saved. As I bent in prayer, stricken by the bitterest sorrow that a mother's heart could know, broken-hearted beneath the rod of chastisement which my Master wielded, because of a rebellious heart, knowing that but a few short moments were left to the darling of life,

my soul bent down. I felt the stranger's hand upon my head, and a soft peace stole in upon my soul. "O God!" I cried, "not my will, not my will, but Thine be done!"

At my cry, the soft light which had flooded the apartment had died out; the holy face of my strange visitor, like a shadowy vision, disappeared. The crowd, and scaffold, and my doomed boy, were all gone. My fire was burning low. I was still on my knees. I sprang up and bent over the child. His waxen hands were crossed loosely upon his breast; the sweet smile of a baby's slumber was clinging to his lips; and his golden hair, moist with the dew of sleep, in clustering rings lay upon his pillow. There was no sign of conflict. And yet over the cradle of my babe I knew that a battle had been lost and won, and the Angel of Sleep was vanquished by the Angel of Death. I knew now that the vision had been sent of God, and that he deemed my hand too weak to guide the footsteps of my baby. I knew now that in mercy, not in anger, He smote me; and, with the agonizing memory of that dream still burnt in heart and brain, I sealed my baby's lips with kisses, lips which would never open until the last great day; and from the crushed and broken flower of my heart sent up the fragrance of resignation and contrition, praying Him, for His Son's dear sake, to smite me gently; and consigning with a willing, though bleeding heart, to his tenderer, truer, wiser care, my baby-boy.

For the *New York Mercury*, February 10, 1866.

THE GOLD BRACELET

"Lost, on or near Pearl street, on last evening, a heavy gold bracelet, set with rubies. The finder will be liberally rewarded by leaving the same at this office."

Lloyd Graham let his brown eyes rest upon the advertisement with a little knowing twinkle in them, then carefully drew from his pocket an article of jewelry amazingly like the description.

"That's always the way," he complained, sotto voce. "Confound the luck!"

Lloyd was an honest young man; had not the least desire to keep the bauble from its rightful owner, but he had woven many fancies with that toy as nucleus. He had built him a beautiful castle, whose turrets rose to the heavens, and the cornerstone was that tiny bracelet, which he could grind to powder with one touch of his foot.

"How am I to see the owner of this, I'd be pleased to know?" he continued, as though he was defrauded of a right. "Everybody goes to that office, but"—with a long sigh, which utterly demolished his fairy castle, "If I must, I must—so here goes."

Lloyd arose from his lounging position, and smoothed his mustache as an inducement to obey the mandate "increase and grow," took bracelet and paper, and started for the office of the *Star*.

Just at that moment, a carriage, drawn by a fine pair of bays, stopped at the entrance, and he caught a glimpse of deep blue eyes, and shining hair; of full red lips, and an oval face, with the faintest rose-tint flushing its soft whiteness; and then the driver opened the door, and then the lady alighted, saying, with a pretty willfulness, to some one inside:

"Now, Charles, you know I will. I want to get it myself. Stay where you are."

Lloyd passed in after the lady, and stood at her side when she spoke to the editor, who was lounging in a smoking-chair, cigar in hand.

"Good morning, Mr. Fry. Has the bracelet been found yet?"

"Not yet, Miss Daisy. I'm sorry to say," was the reply, given with a deferential bow. "I'm afraid it's gone for good."

"Oh, I hope not," with a slight quivering of the lips. "I wanted it so much."

"Then you shall be gratified," said Lloyd, suddenly advancing to her side, and placing the jewel in her hand. "I did not see the advertisement until this morning, which accounts for the delay. I was just on the point of leaving it with Mr. Fry, but I place it in your fairer hands."

Graham bowed, and was turning away, when the lady called: "Sir."

He returned to her side. She was blushing, and evidently ill at ease. She made two or three unsuccessful attempts to speak, and finally said, half vexed at her own blushing:

"I don't know what to say. The bracelet is worth ten times its value to me. You read the advertisement. I shall be most happy to — to —"

The lady paused suddenly, seeing the hot flush that burnt in Lloyd's face, and he, with a slight curl of his handsome lips replied:

"Thanks, no. I shall not claim the reward at present."

Then he left the office, and stood at the side-door until she had entered her carriage, and driven away.

All day long the fine eyes and rosy lips of the lady played hide-and-seek in Lloyd's busy brain, and at evening he impatiently threaded his way to the editor's office; found that functionary, of course, smoking his cigar, as though he had never left off since early morning.

Mr. Fry, smoking, peered up at Lloyd from the depths of his chair, and through the clouds of smoke, and replied to his questions in this manner:

"Have a cigar? Oh, you won't; so much the better for me, and the worse for you. The young lady! Oh, with blue eyes! Ah, I did not notice her eyes; never do. Think eyes are all alike, so long as one can see out of them; but as to the young lady, why, my dear fellow, I can't say who she is. Her brother writes for my paper, and calls her Daisy, since she looks as much like one as anything else. She brings his MSS., that's all I know." And Lloyd, no wiser man than he was, went home.

The many-colored leaves of autumn fell with their soft music to the earth, and the pitying snow came down and buried them; but the wild winds came, laughing in and out among the trees, tossing the snow from their branches, and breaking the crystal fetters that bound the streams. Then the warm sunshine came, and the daisies under the hedge lifted their rosy lips to meet his kisses. The city grew hot and dusty. Fever and her pallid train left the rosy country and took her station in the dust and heat of the town, until citizens fled from her presence. Among these Lloyd Graham. He seized an armful of pieces of

apparel, jammed them into his portmanteau indiscriminately, snapped the lock, with the self-gratulatory remark:

"There, that's done. Folks make so much fuss over packing. It don't take me five minutes. I can't see but it's easy enough." And then took the train, which bore him near his Aunt Sarah's country-house, and twenty miles from the city.

Half an hour's ride, and Lloyd Graham found himself at the station. Fifteen minutes' walk, and he was at Aunt Sarah's. What a home-like place it was, that cozy white frame, with its broad, long piazza, overrun by honeysuckle and roses; and barely visible from the road, because of its poplars, and maples, and evergreens. Lloyd walked under the vines, through the hall, and out into the clean, white-floored kitchen. The walls were garnished by feathery asparagus-boughs, and Aunt Sarah had put up several clover wreaths about the windows. She was there, singing some cheery song to herself; her round, plump arms buried to the elbows in flour; and her fine, motherly face aglow with the sweetest of lights — the light of perfect contentment. Lloyd, like the mischievous fellow that he was, stepped up behind her, seized her in a sudden embrace, and bestowed a hearty kiss upon her lips.

She uttered a scream of terror, which changed into one of delight when she recognized her nephew.

"I declare," she said, laughing and crying in one breath, "I'm so glad to see you I don't know what to say. Take that chair. Are they all well at home?"

A cloud darkened Lloyd's face; but he replied:

"Yes, aunt; all well."

"How doleful you look! I'll soon have that forlorn expression off your handsome face. Why don't you get married, Lloyd?"

There floated up to him a vision of blue eyes and scarlet lips, the reality which he had seen at the editor's office, and he replied, soberly:

"Because I never saw but one woman that I would marry; and I never saw her but once!"

"Love at first sight! Strange that you should be caught that way, Lloyd. Emma Russell is out here now. She is a very sweet girl. I must have you two meet. Where's your

mother, dear? I want to see her so much. Clara was always my darling."

Lloyd arose and went to his aunt's side.

"She is well, dear aunt," he said. "Have you not heard that she is — is — asleep these two months?"

No, she had not heard; and all the old sad scenes had to be repeated in Aunt Sarah's cozy kitchen — lived over again in the repetition, until Lloyd's heart bled afresh, only to be soothed the more tenderly by Aunt Sarah's sympathy.

After a few days, time hung heavy on Lloyd's hands. One breezy afternoon, he strolled out into the beautiful woodland, that clasped the horizon in its beautiful chain. The birds, too indolent to sing, were all a-twitter in the branches, and the bees had fallen asleep in the clover blossoms. Lloyd had brought for his enjoyment Tennyson's "Idyls," and was looking for a friendly bank, which should be both shady and dry, when he heard the sweet, clear tones of a woman. She was singing some ballad; but her voice so turned in and out of the woods that Lloyd could not distinguish them. Following the voice, it was not long before he found the singer. She was sitting at the foot of a tree, busily engaged in weaving a moss-basket from mosses she had gathered. Her hat was lying at her side filled with ferns; and her sweet face, gleaming out beneath the curls, was that of Lloyd's lady of the editor's office.

Never very diffident, and recognizing the face instantly, Lloyd stepped forward with a smile. The lady ceased her pleasant singing, and, with a startled look, prepared to rise from her informal position.

"Sit still, I beg of you," he said bowing. "I should be sorry to disturb you. My aunt's woodland joins this, and I was not aware that I was trespassing. We have met before," he added, watching the faint flush rising to her cheek. "I am Lloyd Graham — you remember I restored your bracelet to you?"

"Well, sir!"

"Little golden-hair is haughty," thought Lloyd.

"After that," pursued Lloyd, unabashed, "I found an ebony cross which might have fallen from the guard of the bracelet. It is here."

He pointed to a small cross fastened to his chatelaine, but did not offer to loosen it. A playful expression flitted across her face as she extended her hand for it, with a smiling "thank you." He imprisoned the hand a moment, and, then as she withdrew it, said:

"Thank me for nothing? Unless you command me, I shall not return it just yet. Come, please resume your pretty work, and, if you'll allow me, I'll read Tennyson to you. Don't you like him?"

"Very much," she replied, enthusiastically. "Will you read me 'Maud'?"

"No, not this morning. I will some time. Which one of the 'Idyls' will you have?"

"Why can't I have 'Maud'?" she asked, half-pouting.

"Firstly, I haven't it here. Secondly, I shouldn't like to commence a friendship with you by so cynical a story."

"Then read me 'Elaine.'"

The busy hands resumed their pleasant toil; and the full, rich voice took up the sad, sad burden of "Elaine"; and by-and-by the toiling hands of Daisy were lying motionless upon her work, and her blue eyes grew tearful as she drank in the well-remembered story. When Lloyd's voice ceased, she drew a deep sigh, and repeated:

"Not knowing he should die a holy man."

The sunshine had risen step by step, and the shadows had deepened until it was twilight in the woods. The lady rose, took her unfinished basket and her jaunty little hat, and said, gravely (for the shadow cast by the story was still upon her):

"I thank you, Mr. Graham, although you have saddened me. I must go home now."

Lloyd resumed the cap which he had thrown aside, and prepared to accompany her.

"Do you intend," he said slightly embarrassed, "to condemn me to calling you, as Mr. Fry does, Miss Daisy? or will you give me a more tangible name?"

She hesitated for a moment, and then replied:

"Certainly, I will give you my entire history if you wish. My name is Emma Ross. My brother is an invalid — a writer

—and we came here for his health. In the city I teach school.”

Lloyd’s lip curled slightly. She observed it, and added at once:

“I thank Mr. Graham for his kindness. School-teachers have not often rarer enjoyment than a fine reader for an afternoon in the quiet fragrance of the woods. I turn off here. Good evening.”

Lloyd, brave, manly, full of noble impulses, as I would have you think him, and as he certainly was, yet had learned to curl his lip at those who were far above him in that they fulfilled the mandate “That which thy hands find to do, do it.” And now, as he watched the graceful form flitting up the narrow lane, he repeated bitterly:

“Pshaw! A school-teacher! Yet how intelligent she is! How pretty her eyes looked, full of tears. I wish she was a Russell. They are not wealthy, though Aunt Jane thinks so; but they have good blood in their veins — school-teachers seldom do. She is a lady though — this golden-haired little teacher of mine. Lloyd Graham, you can’t marry a teacher any more than you can a washer-woman! And here you’ve been dreaming of her all these months! Give it up at once! Avaunt, dreams!”

However commanded, those dreams hovered still about Lloyd’s brain, like bees about a honey-comb in summertime. His last waking thought was of the little teacher; and, when his feet, enchanted, wandered into dreamland, they paused beneath the shadow of an old tree in the green woods; and again he was reading “Elaine,” with a most dangerous emphasis upon such verses as:

“Not to be with you — not to see your face!
Alas! for me, then, my good days are done.”

and a most dangerous glance into the blue, innocent eyes, that were fixed upon his face.

After this, and spite of resolutions *au contraire*, hourly made, every afternoon found Lloyd in the woodland; but it was a long time before he found Miss Daisy there again. When he did, she was under the same tree where he had seen her before.

“Good afternoon, Miss Daisy,” he said, gayly; seating him-

self by her side. "I always come here for daisies, but for the past few days have found none."

"Daisies are not always found when searched for," she replied, smilingly.

"No; but I am content to have found one, after many days' searching."

"Be not sure that it is found. It may flit."

"True, I shall hold it by a stronger chain. What shall I read while you work at that woman's work? But first — how is your brother? and what do you bring work to the wood for?"

"Brother is better, and I bring work here because I have done so every year since I can remember; and it makes me happy. Any more questions, Monsieur?"

"Yes," glancing into the demure face, "Were you ever unhappy?"

A shadow fell and lingered on Daisy's face as she replied:

"Two years ago, father, and mother, and sister Lillian, all died in the space of three months; and, shortly afterward, Harry lamed himself for life."

"My poor, poor child!"

In reply to the earnest sympathy of his tone, tears started to Daisy's eyes; but, controlling herself bravely, she said:

"You have 'Hiawatha,' read me some of that, please."

"On condition that you will come here on every fine afternoon, until I finish the poem, *ma belle*."

She hesitated, then promised; and the weird story was commenced.

Days passed; and still under the sombre shadows of the forest — where once the Indian races had held their terrible councils and courted their dark-eyed loves, this story of their lives were being read; still the shining curls and blue eyes of the little teacher were the stars in his horizon. Vainly had Aunt Sarah striven to arouse him to his duties as a suitor; Emma Russell had no charms for him, and he was even so rude as to remark:

"That he didn't care a rushlight for all the Russells that ever lived."

Poor Aunt Sarah's innocent ambition lulled itself to sleep with its own complaining.

One goldenly glorious afternoon, when crimson and gold were mottling the emerald of the forest, and chattering squirrels were beginning to gather their united stores, Lloyd finished the story of Hiawatha to his little listener. She drew a deep sigh as he closed the book, and said:

"I have heard our last reading. I am going to leave for the city to-morrow."

"Going to-morrow, Miss Daisy? Surely not."

"Surely yes; my school needs me."

"But I need you more, Daisy; far, far more."

"Lloyd," she said; "you will soon forget these pleasant afternoons, and this poor Daisy whom you think you need now."

Of course, the young gentleman protested he should do no such thing; and of course, little Daisy, like the foolish child she was, believed he spoke "Gospel-Truth." She asked one question.

"Do you — are you willing to marry the poor school-teacher, lovingly and truly?"

"Freely, and oh, so lovingly, my Daisy," he made answer. "To me you are rich in all that makes life valuable; and a teacher but of innocence, my woodland flower."

"Then Lloyd, I must tell you, dear, that I am not poor, as the world judges, although a teacher. I could not feel that idleness was right, so I have taught. One deception you must forgive — my name is Emma Ross Russell — Lloyd," archly; "have I refinement and family? I gave you my middle name, because I did not wish you to know your near neighbor; and, because —"

"What, my Daisy?"

"I wanted to see if you would love your pride best, or me."

Lloyd told his aunt of his engagement to Emma Russell, and that good lady wiped her glasses, put them on; took them off; and repeated the rubbing, and still found them misty, from very joy.

"Who'd a'thought," she said, laughing and crying together; "that when I was e'en most breakin' my heart because things wasn't goin' my way, that here they was a doin' that very thing. Well, Lloyd, you was obstinate about not seeing Emma Russell, and yet you was caught in spite of yourself. God bless

you, my boy. Things will turn out queerly. If it hadn't been for that lost bracelet, you wouldn't have found a wife."

And, reader mine, we would never have found a romance hidden in the heart of Daisy Russell Graham.

For the *New York Mercury*. March 17, 1866.

MISCARRIED BUT CARRIED

"Mr. Lollman Barker," read the postman from a dainty rectangular envelope one chill February-morning, looking, at the same time, inquiringly at me. He knew as well as I did — that sly rascal — that letters in dainty feminine characters were not wont to find their way to — Beckman street. He knew as well as I did — that sly postman — that all my letters were in yellow envelopes, directed in a great sprawling penmanship, and strongly perfumed — not with heliotrope, as was this one — but with soap, candles, sugar, and codfish. Hence he looked inquiringly at me.

"All right," I replied, assuming the utter nonchalance that I could command, and making an attempt to suggest to the postman that I was in the daily receipt of such letters, which I had a mortifying certainty was a failure, since he read again, "Mr. Lollman Barker. There's no number here, sir."

"I can't help that," I said, curtly, and the letter was left in my hand. I listened until the postman, after the manner of postmen in general, rattled down the steps, and so out of sight, then turned into my room and easy-chair before I opened the note. The initials were black, and there was a slender black thread running around the envelope, which made me shudder as we do in a sudden cold wind. I opened it soberly. It read:

"My Dear Loll: — A letter from you at last! How happy I was to hear! I had almost forgotten that Hope was still alive, and I was sure that you had forgotten your old true 'Pet'; though you may say, and undoubtedly do, remember Clara. I hope the babies are quite well. Kiss them for me. We are all well, and delighted with our new home. Your note was so brief. Do come and see me soon. Dear Loll, I am glad that you are happy. Yours affectionately,
"Pet."

“P.S.— I have had some flirtations this winter, Loll. The dark-eyed gentleman you scolded me for flirting with when you were here, you recollect, spent last evening here.”

So it ended. It was a simple, innocent, childish letter, that somehow clung to my interest as the scent of the heliotrope to its leaves; and yet, from the time that my blue-eyed little sister broke from the clinging of my heart, and “went up higher” with the gold of her curls untarnished, and the white of her soul unsullied, I had never had “a pet.” From the time my dying mother touched my boyish brow with chilling fingers, and whispered all the sweetest names that mothers use, I had never been called “My dear Loll.”

Mine had been a life of isolation. Early orphaned — doubly orphaned — since my father left no good name to stand up by, but, instead, the burden of a sullied one, which I must lift again to its pristine excellence — my heart had clung with an intense passionate devotion to the tender little sister, who, in turn, clung to me. But her little hands fell coldly from me; her blue eyes looked no love into mine; and the violets, wet with dew, were not chillier than her brow.

So I was left alone — a proud, sensitive, poor boy, bending under the burden of a sullied name. So I began life, wrapping my reserve and pride, cloak-like, about me, until, on this night, at twenty-four, I stood a rich man — a successful merchant, whose name was as good as gold on 'Change, but whose heart had found no one to cling to — whose thoughts too often wandered.

“O what shall I be at fifty,
Should nature keep me alive,
If I find this world so bitter
When I am but twenty-five?”

This much I have written of myself, as some extenuation of what I did, and because I thought it all over that morning, so I read and re-read the girlish letter. I saw that it was post-marked “Washington,” and, by a strange coincidence, I was just preparing for a trip to that city on business. With no definite object in view, I carefully copied the heading of the letter, “Clinton street, No. 65.” Then writing on the envelope

"Opened by mistake," I took my hat and muffler, went down the street and re-mailed it, feeling as though I had lost my best friend.

That was Saturday. On the following Tuesday, I was in Washington, busy as I could be transacting business, until twilight released me for the day. It was not very cold that evening, though the snow lay a few inches deep upon the silent streets, having been falling all day; and a general air of winter made me draw my muffler closer about my ears.

As I reached the hotel, a sense of my utter loneliness and desolation, as it often did, smote me suddenly. I turned and walked away — walking quickly and steadily, with a gloomy heart and aching head. I shall always think it was Fate, or was it the good Providence? that led me, suddenly, I knew not why, to lift my head and glance at the house I was passing. It was only a small, white frame cottage; but through the open window I saw a fairer sight than I had ever seen in any richer home. It was the face of a young girl, dipping about in the lamplight, as she tended some flowers in the window — a face fair and smiling, with a light upon it which would make it forever "firelight, starlight, moonlight," to the happy heart which should win it. I glanced at the door, 65 was on it; and at the one adjoining at the corner I saw "Clinton Street."

This, then, was the writer of the note; these, then, were the eyes that had smiled when some other Lollman Barker had called her his "Pet"; these were the hands which had, birdlike, fluttered over the paper, and left the melody for another heart's cheering.

With no more idea of what I was to do than a wild Indian suddenly elected to gubernatorial chair would have, I mounted the steps and lifted the quaint knocker. As the summons rang out sharply I remembered that I did not know her name — that I knew nothing, and had no right there; but, before I could escape, the door was opened, and the little fairy stood before me, with a question in her eyes. I bowed very low as I said, prompted by I know not what good spirit, "Mr. Lollman Barker, at your service."

With a cry of delight, the child — for she seemed no more — threw her arms around my neck. Was I to blame for fold-

ing her closely there and kissing the red mouth so temptingly offered to me? Was I to blame for listening to the tender "My dear, dear Loll," and returning it time and again, emphasized by kisses, with "My dear, darling Pet?" I dare say I was, but I don't think the most rigid disciplinarian of a monastery could have been proof against the Evil One if he had chosen such a shape to tempt.

"Come in — come into the light," said Pet. "I want to see how you are changed, cousin Loll."

"It seems I am a cousin, then," I said, *sotto voce*.

So, because I couldn't help myself, I was pulled into the little warm parlor by those rose-tipped fingers, and, as I thought, to the verge of ruin.

"Why," said Pet, carefully surveying me from head to foot, "you are very much changed, Cousin Loll. Your eyes are darker than they were, and that huge beard makes all the difference in the world in your face. Did you get that in the army?"

As I hope to be forgiven, I said "Yes."

"Why, Loll," and here the little witch laughed — "your feet haven't grown any smaller. Have they? But then, you know, you're not so short yourself, so they don't look so very terribly large."

"Has your ladyship finished your criticism?" I said, assuming an ease I was far from feeling, and putting one arm around her as I spoke. "If so, we will have a quiet, sensible chat. Sit down here, Pet."

Laughing and blushing, she escaped from my arms and sat down, saying, half pleased, half provoked:

"You're the same Loll yet. Aren't you? How are Annie and the babies?"

"All right," I replied. "How are your folks?"

Pet's face shadowed. I knew the meaning of that black line about that letter.

"Mama and Kate and Clara are well," she said. "But, oh Loll, haven't you heard?"

"No," I said, soberly; and she, looking through tears, answered me:

"Papa is dead — has been dead a year. And you have never heard it?"

Saddened because the sunshine had gone out of Pet's face, I asked:

"How did he die?"

It was a simple question, but the child burst into a passion of tears, crying:

"Oh, Loll, could, could you ask that?"

I knew then that I had stepped on forbidden ground.

"I did not know, darling, but I will not ask. Won't you forgive me the fault?"

At my caresses, Pet smiled again, and I changed the topic.

With that peculiar childishness which I had first seen in the face, and since continually noticed in her actions, the tears dried themselves from her eyes as readily as the smiles had gone, and she was again happy, though smiling a little sadly, like sunshine seen through mist.

"Why don't you ask where the family are?" she said, saucily. "You used to like Clara best, you know."

"Well, I didn't know it," I responded, with intense thankfulness that I could, at least, tell one truth. "But where are the family?"

"Gone to hear the lecture. I didn't feel like going, so I concluded to stay alone."

I sat and talked to Pet for an hour after this, gave her a sketch of my military experience (purely imaginary), excused myself for unanswered letters on the ground of irregular mails and hospital regulations; and, finally, holding her two hands in mine, kissed her good night, magnanimously refusing to stay until the family came home, on the plea of an important engagement, but promising to call again on the following day, and take my fair cousin sleigh-riding. As I left the house, I turned and saw my little Pet standing in the moonlight. A ray, yellow and flickering, from the parlor lights, stole through the open door, and fell on her soft pale curls, and she stood before me a vision of beauty and innocence, which I shall never forget.

"Wake me by no gesture — sound of breath or stir of vesture,
Let the bless'd apparition melt not yet to its divine.

No approaching hush, no breathing, or my heart must swoon to death in
The too utter life thou bringest, O thou dream of Geraldine!"

Almost mechanically, I repeated the words, looking at the

vision which had, starlike, arisen upon the desolate darkness of my life; and then, as the door closed on her, shutting her from my sight, and me from her sweet presence, I, having nothing to lose and all to gain, resolved to think no more about it, but to see the tragedy or comedy, as it might be, to its close. So the curtain fell on the first act, and so I, who knew nothing of acting, became an actor.

The next day, as I had promised, I took my way to 65 Clinton Street. I drove a gay team; and the day was charmingly productive of good spirits, clear and cold, with a still air, in which one's voice rang out like a bell, and a blue sky overhead, flecked with white clouds, like a sea of violets, with here and there, a drift of snow, which had not as yet melted from the hedges. I must confess to a little sinking of the heart as I touched the knocker, and a great fear and trembling as I heard steps approaching; but, to my great surprise, neither Mama or Kate or Clara opened the door for me, but my little Pet. She greeted me coyly. The twilight was not there to lend her boldness, and flushed beneath my cousinly kiss like a blushrose. I met Mama, Kate, and Clara, as pleasant a group as one would wish to see.

"Here he is, mama," announced Pet, and immediately the lady in deep mourning arose and welcomed me, kissing me on both cheeks, and saying, softly:

"I am glad to see thee, Lollman. Is thee quite well?"

Clara, a tall regal girl, older, I thought than Pet — arose, with a flush on her cheek but greeted me coldly, even distrustingly; but little Kate climbed to my knee, and talked to her Cousin Lollman with childish abandon.

"How much you are altered, Lollman!" said Clara. "I should never have known you."

"How splendidly you are altered, my cousin!" I responded. "I should never have known you."

Clara lifted her eyes and searched my face; but I bore the scrutiny bravely, returning the look with one of cousinly pride in her beauty.

"Did thee leave Annie and the babies all well?" asked the elderly lady, to which I replied:

"Quite well; and Annie sent her love to you all," mentally

vowing that, if I were out of that scrape, I'd never get into another. Pet came to my relief by saying:

"Mama, you and Cousin Loll can talk all your news at tea. I want my ride now. For once, Miss Carrie, I'll have your beau."

At this light badinage, a look of pain, instantly suppressed, passed over Clara's fine face; and I guessed that Clara's heart was more to the real Cousin Lollman than all the other hearts in the world. I knew, too, that she thought me changed, and would not for her life show any lingering love for her cousin.

Obedying the imperious little "Pet," I kissed them all 'round, and promised to go back to tea, and tossed "Pet" into the cutter, obeying the good mother's command of "Wrap Minnie up warmly, Lollman, for she is a fragile little thing," in the most literal sense.

Of course, we had a most delightful ride, and the sun was quite down when I took my Pet from the sleigh, and led her into the home-parlor.

I stayed to tea; I answered all their inquiries as best I could, pleading my absence in the army as an excuse for ignorance, and being at least, an imaginative man, so interested them with descriptions of my camp-life and doings, with camp anecdotes and stories, that they forgot to cross-question, when such would have been my ruin.

After that, I went often to the house of my new-found aunt. Day after day, I took "Pet" sleighing, and sometimes little Kate but Clara invariably refused. I do not think she doubted my identity; but I know she, loving the other Lollman, missed in me what she had learned to love in him.

So time passed. March came, with its mild, sunny whispers of the coming spring, and bebies of blue-birds, and still I lingered in Washington, neglecting my business entirely in my pursuit after the greater riches of a love which seemed daily stooping closer to me — drawing my soul upward as the moon draws the sea. I, so secure in my love, did not often fret about the other Lollman, who might, by some possibility, step in and rob me of my cousinship, until one beautiful moonlight night I had a realizing proof of his existence.

We were sitting in the parlor, Aunt reading her Bible, as

was her wont before retiring; Clara bent over some fleecy woman's work; Katie lying on the floor, half burying in her sunny curls the large, black Newfoundland dog, which Pet told me had been Lollman's gift to Clara, adding:

"How strange that he has forgotten you, Loll."

And Pet and I were together in a shadow of the corner, talking as only those can talk who have grown to be unconsciously of themselves, it may be, all in all to each other.

Sitting so quiet and happy, the great dog suddenly sprang from Katie's embracing arms, with a cry of joy, and flew to the door. Just then, the knocker announced a visitor.

Clara, pale and rigid as a white lily, arose and opened the door, quieting the dog with a touch of her hand and a word. Pet and I, sitting in the corner of the room facing the front door, could see the guest the moment he stepped into the hall. He was a tall man, with a fine, noble face, which was deathly pale, and very thin; and, alas! as he entered, we saw he had lost one limb. The dog, with a low cry, sprang up; but the man, putting him down, though gently, as though he could not be other than gentle even to a dog, opened his arms to Clara, saying, almost under his breath:

"Clara, my darling Clara."

Ah, her woman's heart was not to be deceived. There was no coldness, no distrust, now. With a perfect content softening both face and voice, she welcomed her true cousin, Lollman, and — as I knew from the looks of her face — her more than cousin.

They lingered but a moment in the hall, but in that moment Minnie had sprung from my side in bewilderment, and her mama was at the door, followed by Kate.

The poor soldier came in then, but stopped as he noticed the astonished faces.

"Aunt Clara?" he said, mournfully, "Pet, Katie, have you no welcome? I could not write you the sad news, but surely some of you will welcome me."

"Lollman," said Clara's ringing tones, as she pointed to me, standing alone. "You have that vile imposter to thank for your slack welcome. They cannot understand what my heart has told me all the time — that he is a cheat."

Then I stood forward, and Pet going to me, stood by my side.

"He is no cheat," she cried impulsively, "are you, Loll?"

"What is all this?" asked Aunt.

And I answered, speaking slowly:

"It is simply this. I am not your nephew, nor the cousin of these dear girls, though my name is Lollman Barker; and I am, as Clara has said (in this one thing) an imposter."

Then I told them how it all happened, and of my lonely life, and little Pet pleaded for me excuses which her dear, childish heart thought were unanswerable.

The real Lollman Barker did not miss his welcome from his aunt and cousins; and, like the happy man he was, seeing himself in the light which illumined Clara's face, knowing that a shattered limb, lost in the right cause, lost him no dearer treasure, he came generously to my assistance, declared himself acquainted with the firm of which I was partner, and fully forgave me an offence which was not easy of forgiveness.

So Aunt Clara, because of his and Pet's intercession, because of Katie's looks and the happy look in Clara's eyes, forgave me my sin, and when, some months afterward, there was a double wedding, and with darling Pet's hand in mine, I asked her blessing, she gave it truly, saying, in her soft voice:

"The Lord bless and preserve ye, my children, and cause the light of His countenance to shine upon ye."

And thus far in life's journey the Lord has blessed us and preserved us, and the light of His countenance has shone upon us. Thus far in life the sweet visions which I saw that first night at 65 Clinton Street has repeated itself in the fireside glow of my own home, and the dear face of my child-wife is to me starlight, firelight, and moonlight.

As for the other Lollman Barker, though a lame man and an invalid, I do not see how he could well be happier; and he says he could have forgiven a greater delay in the note for the sake of such joy; and Clara, unshadowed as yet by the shadow that we know must fall, keeps her heart and her face in sunshine, for the strengthening of him — poor fragile plant — who shall never more be wholly strong until he blooms anew in the light of Heaven. Mama, and Katie, and even Tray are content.

So the letter which miscarried was, after all, well carried; and, with my darling by my side, I bless the sin and cheat which won for me so dear a treasure. Truly.

“There is a divinity which shapes our ends,
Rough hew them as we may.”

April 28, 1866.

GRACE'S THANKSGIVING

Clear and calm and cold “Thanksgiving” dawned. It had snowed all night, and the soft flakes had only ceased to fall with the rising of early day. Like a fair child wrapped in soft laces and velvets, the pure earth lay in the smiling sunshine, and every tree and shrub blossomed anew in snowy blossoms, which frail and fleeting hung pale and quivering upon their tender stems. Surely the sun never smiled more brightly nor the cloudless sky shone more benignantly upon merry New England than it did upon that chill November-morning. A thousand homes were garnished outward in token of their inner joy; a thousand hearts, flower-like, lifted their grateful incense to high Heaven.

Alone, in the great old farmhouse which had aforetime been so merry with the children's voices and so happy with the children's faces, Grace Wright kept Thanksgiving. She arose just as the amber sun set itself like a gem above the snow-capped mountains in its amethystine setting; and the first thought she had was of her utter loneliness. Among them all — the children to whom she had been as a mother — not one of them had bidden her come to them for the celebration of that day. They had gone from the home-nest like young birds, and never had a thought for the lonely mother-bird who yet lingered. But Grace's tender heart — more tender perhaps, from being bruised — framed for them all excuses; and when she knelt in prayer their names were on her lips. She sat down by the window; and from the scene without, her thoughts passed to the other days when she had seen Thanksgiving. Like a dream the years passed in review before her, and those Thanksgiving days which had set their seal to each of them.

From the first that she could recollect, when her father had carried her in his arms and placed her proudly in her high-chair by his side; one after all she told them all, as does the devotee his beads. What a marvel that table was to her, set out in the glow of the afternoon sun; how long and prosy her father's blessing seemed to her childish impatience, and how she wished her father would merely say, "Thank you, father," as she did to him when she was grateful; then how delicious the dinner! From this first remembrance her mind spanned a dozen such, when cheery faces and happy hearts made full of sunshine and Thanksgiving day a day of lifting up of hearts in truth.

Then came one — ah! how well she remembered that! how it stood out like a finger-post from the dimness of the past! She was to be a bride upon that day. Young and gay and happy. Grace Wright had no thought but that her heart in its deepest gratitude should bow down; but this was not to be.

Thanksgiving came and for the first time no holly decked the walls, no dinner was prepared, for a vacant chair stood among them, speaking dumbly of the one who had gone out from the home-group. Oh, surely, in that house of prayer the lintels and the doorposts were sprinkled with the sacrificial blood, and yet the angel passed not over. He paused; he entered; and at his mute call, one, the ripest for heaven, rose and followed him, and left a home in darkness because of her presence gone. That day made the heart of Grace a woman's heart, and set the seal of care upon her brow. She who was to have been a bride took up her cross, strong in the strength of God, and with firm hand put aside from her the hopes of her youth. Not without tears, not without regret; for life had glowed and brightened at her approaching footsteps, until she dreamed that cares were pleasures, its roses thornless.

Poor Grace! Her woman's heart asked pityingly for herself, and yet not selfishly. She shut out from her thoughts the one who was to have been her bridegroom; how her heart leaped at the memory of him after the lapse of all these years, and turned to the poor stricken father and the motherless children who looked to her for comfort. How like a dream it seemed! That day when she lifted the babe from its cradle to her bosom, and vowed to devote her life to these children.

There were five of them, and Grace was but fifteen; but she was old enough to walk unshrinkingly in the path of duty. After this, one after another Thanksgiving days crowned the autumns, until once again the house was shadowed. The father laid aside his labors, for to him "the night had come wherein no man can work," and over the beseeching of his white face Grace had drawn the doubly-orphaned children closer to her heart, and consecrated her young life anew to their service. She was young then. Before her spread a broad, beautiful life, redolent of pleasure, but her tender feet clung rather to the rugged path made sunny by the smile of God. Once more her heart waged fearful war with itself. Her lover came again to plead his cause; but she knew that here were conflicting duties; and her heart bruised, bleeding, and conquered, bowed before her stronger duty. Then Grace suffered. The sight of those careless faces was almost hateful to her. She could not bear the clamor of their voices; but her heart would smite her for the feeling, and gentler patience did atonement for the wrong done them in her thoughts. Another Thanksgiving, and the sea rolled between Grace and her lover. Her feet were set unshrinkingly in the path she had marked out for them to tread. Since then, one by one, the little family had grown up and gone from the home-nest. Three were married, Charlie was at college, and the babe in the cradle had lifted up its baby-arms to its angel-mother and been taken up. So Grace was alone in the house, and among the little family she had reared not one had bade her come to them. But she would not think of that — would not, and still tears were in her eyes. In spite of her, "alone and friendless" smote her heart at thirty-five.

A knock at the door startled her. Not waiting for a bidding, the door opened, and Candace, the maid-of-all-work, companion and friend of Grace, pushed her woolly head into the room.

"If you please, Miss Grace," she said, with the familiarity of an old and favored servant, "I'd like to know hows old Mrs. Burke's goin' to git her Thanksgivin' ef you don't take it to her, and Johnny O'Toole his cake, and Jimmy his blocks. Now, Miss Grace, don't you go to a flutterin', honey; come down to your breakfas' and den go to yer errends, and yer heart 'ill feel thanksgivin'. See ef it don't."

Candace withdrew. Her homely, but approving words smote Grace's tender heart. This poor, friendless, black woman could be more grateful than she; nay, could point out her duty. She sank slowly to her knees, and when at length she arose and passed downstairs, it was as though an angel had stirred the waters of her soul and left its radiant glory on her face. No more repining now, no more weary heartaches. Old Candace wondered at the holy calm settled upon her face as she came in, and muttered to herself "Saint Grace."

The simple meal concluded, Grace, cloaked and hooded, started out upon her errand of mercy, saying to Candace as she went:

"We'll have no Thanksgiving dinner to-day, Candace, but we'll keep Thanksgiving in our hearts."

"The Lord bless you, Miss Grace," responded the old negress, fervently. "May the Lord bless ye and make the light of his count'nance shine upon ye."

Out in the sunshine went Grace, with the simple hearty blessing folding about her like a warm garment, and the bracing air breathed in her lungs renewed and quickened life. She had scarcely turned the corner of the lane when suddenly from an opposite direction the merry sound of sleighbells woke the echoes in the quiet lane, and the ringing of the horses' hoofs as they struck the crusty snow announced visitors to the lonely old farmhouse. One, two, three, four sleighs full of rosy faces and ruddy noses which Jack Frost had nipped with mischievous fingers. What a merry party! As they dashed up to the door, Old Candace clapped her hands with delight. How the occupants tumbled pell mell from the warm shelter of the buffalo robes out into the snow like rosy winter apples, late in falling. There were Hannah and her husband and three little Hannahs; George and his wife and two little Georges exactly alike; Mary and her husband and the baby; Charlie, the gay, young collegian, the darling of all; and a tall handsome man, with somewhat of care upon his brow, and a little frost upon his beard which the frost had not put there.

How that old house overflowed with mirth and happiness; how childish voices made the old rafters ring, and childish feet awoke the sleeping echoes. They were all there; and Hannah,

by virtue of age and goaheadativeness, assumed control. She sent her husband to hide the sleighs in the capacious old shed, and to care for the horses, and then began the day's labor.

"I declare," said Hannah, laughing, "We all stopped at the turning until she started, and we thought she never would go. I never knew Grace to feel so lazy before. Did she feel badly this morning, Candace?"

"'Deed, Miss Hannah," said Candace, "she did dat ting. I was on the p'int of tellin' her half a dozen times, but she rose above it, Missis, an' when she went out her face was as calm and as happy as de sky."

Hannah — laughing, chatting, bustling Hannah — led on her troupe of co-laborers. The rooms blossomed out in evergreens and mountain-ash flamed from every vase, and pretty mottoes, set in spruce, spanned the windows. Then the table; surely Pandora's box freshly opened could not have let more good things escape than did those sleighs. Turkeys borne triumphantly to the kitchen-stove and tender mercies of Candace; hams pink and plump, blooming out in spots of salt and pepper; pickles which might have been carved from emeralds and coral for color; fleecy, light white rolls; golden cakes, and fresh, cool, yellow butter; pies, pumpkin, mince, cranberry, and lemon; a great plum-pudding; and, in fact, all the delicious dainties which a New England kitchen alone can produce. It seemed there was no end to the storing powers of those inexhaustible sleighs. Candace, a good creature, went about her work with tears of gladness rolling unchecked down her cheeks. It was like making another world from chaos, to reduce house, guests, and table to order; but, by some necromancy, it was accomplished, and Hannah, resting her plump hands on her hips, surveyed the apartment with a complacent smile. She had shut out the last-fading daylight, and lamps shone from every niche.

"Isn't it gay?" asked Mary, lifting up the baby to see the table. "Say? I should say so."

The snowy damask, garnished with leaves and berries, and the poetry of the feast; Jellies white, and amber, and purple; pyramids of candies, and grapes, and cakes; rosy apples and snowy riceballs; its prose fully represented by the brown, tempt-turkeys, and the plump, saucy, little pig, wading up to his knees in fresh parsley, and making off with a lemon.

"It's all right," said Hannah, sighing with relief, as though a load of care were taken off her shoulders. "And there comes Grace. Charlie, stop chattering. Let's form a tableau. Here, Captain John," to the grave gentleman, "you must be in the background, so as not to startle her too much. Children, you stand here, Mary and George. All ready! Now, Candace, when she comes, you can open the door for the tableau."

Instantly the noisy voices ceased, the merry clatter of feet hushed, and Candace, looking at the scene, wondered if in the heavens there could be a prettier.

Grace was in the hall. They could hear her voice as Candace stepped out.

"Well, Candace, here I am, as cold as can be; but you ought to have seen how happy old Mrs. Burke was, and Johnny, and all of them. I declare my heart's full. I wonder if all the dear children are happy to-day. I hope so."

Happy! Every one of the dear children was in tears because of happiness.

She was at the door. It opened, and the brilliant scene burst upon her astonished eyes. The gay festoons quivering in the brilliant lights. The beautiful table set for the feast, the pretty mottoes speaking so lovingly to the heart, and above all, that dear, loving group, with the merry children in the foreground, and the grave, manly face of Captain John, shining upon her from the shadow of the curtains.

The tableau proved itself vivant in about one moment after Grace stood before it with her shining face. And then what a greeting there was! How she was carried around, and kissed, and petted, and scolded; and how her tears fell even on Charlie's brown curls, because she was so happy. And all this time Captain John kept in the shadow.

"I thought such naughty thoughts of you all," cried Grace, in loving atonement, "and now I must go off by myself and cry. Oh, my blessed children, my darlings!"

"Hurry along then, Grace; for dinner's ready," said matter-of-fact Hannah. And Grace went.

Going out, she encountered old Candace. She wrung her hand, merely saying through her tears, "Oh, the blessed children!" And then went on.

Once alone, Grace did not sit down to cry out her joy. She was constitutionally opposed to that; but her full heart must have an outlet, and it rose in fervent thanksgiving. She knelt, and bowing her face in her hands, blessed God who had given her such a joyous day. Suddenly she felt an arm thrown about her, and she knew some one was kneeling by her side. It had been an old trick of Charlie's in his boyhood to kneel by her side, so she simply pressed closer to his side, and said:

"Together, dear one, let us bless God!"

"Ay, together, dear one, let us bless God!" responded a deep, manly voice, which was not Charlie's, but which was yet dearer than his.

At the voice, Grace started, and, with a low cry, was folded in a tender embrace.

"Grace, my darling," said Captain John, "the little birds are out of the nest now, will you come to me? Have I not had patience? Will you not give me its reward?"

And Grace, smiling peacefully, did not refuse the reward pledged so long ago, in the first happy days of auld lang syne.

"Dinner, dinner, dinner!" sang out Charlie's cheery voice. "Come, Mother Gracie, to grace the feast."

Surely a happier, merrier, rosier, hungrier group never sat down to a table, and when accidentally(?) a wreath of orange-blossoms — found in one of those inexhaustible sleighs, we suppose — dropped upon Grace's bowed head, the house rang out with applause.

And so to Grace came joy, and peace, and rest, and — and a good thanksgiving dinner, which the young collegian declared was best of all.

But Captain John, glancing up at the dear face opposite, said suddenly and gravely:

"Ah, Charlie, there is something better yet. You know it all. The angel face made a sunshine in a shady place."

New York, Saturday, May 26, 1866.

PRUE'S RUSE

"Oh, Prue! Prue! I can't let you do it, so don't ask me."

Prue put her trim little mouth in trim for smiling, and said:

"Why not, Amos? There's no harm in it."

"No," he replied, with a half sigh. "I don't know as there is; but people will make harm of such things very often. Never mind, Prue. I'll be well by-and-by, and we must pinch as well as we can until then."

"Pinch! Pinch!" croaked up a wrinkled-up old woman, shivering over the stove. "It's nothing but pinch and save, and save and pinch. You envy me the bit I eat, and the bed I sleep in; for, the matter o' that, you'd be welcome to it, since it's an old creaky thing, not fit for a slave. Oh me! me! that I should ever live to be treated so by Lizzie's children! I wish I was dead and gone."

"I'm not going to pinch you, grandmother," screamed Prue; for the old lady's ears were only good for catching words which she should not hear. "You shall have all you want, Amos," with a pretty determined bend of the brows. "I'm going."

The sick man with his white face on the pillow, replied: "No, no! Prue, I can't let you! You make me miserable to talk of it. Just wait, dear, till I can get about again."

Prue shook her shining brown head in a little determined way, which might mean a great deal or nothing at all; but which, in this instance, certainly did mean, translated into prose, for the motion was poetic, "I'll do as I've a mind to do, sir."

She said no more, but stitched away busily at the delicate marvel of cambric and lace; and Amos, with unhappy eyes, watched her swift needle passing in and out of her work, keeping time to the merry little tunes which flashed from her lips.

"Oh, dear!" he said at length, with a deep sigh, "I wish I was a thread, Prue, so that you could work me into some sort of paying shape."

"Better wish to be Prue, so that you could work somebody else into paying shape," said Prue, laughing.

Again a long silence, unbroken until Amos said:

"Come, Prue, I wish you'd dress this limb."

"In a minute, Amos. Just wait until I get this bud made."

"First the limb and then the bud," said Amos, punning upon the names. "I never heard of it being reversed."

"In that case, I shall have to attend to the limb."

So Prue laid aside her work, and began dressing her poor brother's crushed foot and ankle. He had been crushed in some machinery, and the wounds were long in healing; but he waited patiently, hoping for health; and in the meantime, penny by penny, Prue saw her slender stock of money decreasing, until, alarmed lest the wolf should stand at the door, she took work from an embroidery-store, without Amos's knowledge however, and so her weak fingers increased their slender store. She was so cheerful and happy, withal, so free from discontent, that when she finished binding his limb, Amos laid his hand half tenderly on her head and said:

"You're a good girl, Prue!"

"Am I?" she replied. "What new proof of my goodness have I just given now?"

"Just now? Why, giving up your plan when you had set your heart on it, without a word of complaint."

Prue's face flushed, and she did not once lift it up as she replied:

"We must humor invalids, you know. Wait until you are about again, and then I'll have my own way. Now I must take Kate's apron to her; so lie down, like a good boy, and keep grandmother company till I come back."

"Why don't Kate make her own aprons?" growled Amos. "Does she think you're a seamstress, I wonder?"

"Not at all. But you see, Amos, she wanted the apron and I wanted the dollar, so we made a fair exchange. She's a relative, so you needn't frown. I'm sure I'm glad to have something to do; but I must run upstairs and get ready now, so *au revoir*."

With a sunshiny face, Prue went up to her room to prepare for her trip; and presently a little thrill of half-suppressed laughter ran trickling down the stairs, so clear and glad and infectious, that Amos laughed in spite of himself, and old grandmother rubbed her bony hands together and chuckled. Again and again came the musical laughter flashing in and out

of the room, bursting irrepressibly from its restraint, until Amos, unable to endure his isolation from so much fun, called out:

"Prue! Prue! What's the fun? Do tell me."

"Oh," shouted Prue between her peals of laughter, "there's the funniest little mouse up here. You'd die laughing at it!"

"Bring it down, Prue. There's nothing laughable in a mouse."

"Oh, I can't catch it!" said Prue, in return, "but it's the funniest little gray hunchbacked creature. Oh dear, I've laughed until I'm near crying!"

A few moments after, a little demure old lady stepped briskly out the front door of Prue Clifford's home. She was dressed in plain Quaker dress and bonnet, and seemed such a sweet motherly old lady, that you could not help feeling an inclination to throw your arms around her and tell her all your secrets — such a neat, clean, sweet old lady, that you instinctively loved that quiet face looking out from the snowy cap-border. There was a dash of laughter in the brown eyes and on the pale lips; but even this faded away as she ascended the marble steps of a handsome house standing out boldly from the neighboring houses. Her timid ring was answered by a pompous servant, who completely shaded the little drab lady in his pomposity.

"Can I see Mr. Leithwait?" she asked, in a quiet, gentle little voice.

"Engaged," answered the servant, insolently, half closing the door.

"Tell him that a lady has come to engage as governess," replied the lady, in a tone which somehow awed the man, as he replied:

"Oh, in that case you can walk in the library. You're the tenth one to-day."

He preceded her down the long hall, and, opening a door at the far end, said:

"What name?"

"Mrs. Prue."

Then he announced her, and the little old lady found herself in the twilight richness of Mr. Leithwait's library. Books and statuary and flowers all united to render the room attractive,

and the singing birds swung in gilded cages to their own sweet music. Mrs. Prue took all this in at a glance, also that there were two occupants in the room — a handsome man, with lines of care about his brow, and a coarse-looking Englishwoman, dressed in mourning.

"Sit down, Mrs. Prue," said the gentleman, smiling; and Mrs. Prue wondered at the beauty of that smile.

"Mrs. Hobbs," he said to the Englishwoman, "are you competent to teach French, music, and English?"

"Hi can teach Hinglish, sir," was the reply.

He smiled again.

"Oh, you'll never do. I must have the other qualifications too. Good morning, Madam!"

The Englishwoman, who had ruined her fortunes by the great prodigality in the use of her H's, passed sullenly from the room, and Mr. Leithwait turned toward the latest comer.

"I saw by the advertisement," said Mrs. Prue, "that thee wishes for a governess who must not be under forty years of age; and I being in great need for such a situation, came to thee."

She spoke with the most quiet self-possession, but her cowardly little heart was beating a perfect tattoo against her bosom lest she should not suit.

"Can you teach French and music?" asked Mr. Leithwait, resigning himself at once to the charm of her quiet manners.

"I have studied both for many years," replied Mrs. Prue. "I shall endeavor to please thee if thee does not object to my persuasion."

"Oh, not at all; my mother was a Quaker."

"I am glad to hear thee say so. I can bring thee references if thee wishes."

Mr. Leithwait was a man of impulse. He looked into Mrs. Prue's quiet face and decided instantly.

"No matter for those. I have three children, and I require six hours a day to be spent in the schoolroom. The salary is five hundred a year."

"Five hundred a year!" Mrs. Prue's face flushed and her eyes brightened. She had not hoped for that.

"Of course," said the gentleman, "I pay monthly. Are you willing to accept the charge?"

"Yes, certainly; and I thank thee for the liberal terms."

"When can you come?"

"To-morrow, if thee wishes."

"Very well, it's settled then. Stay a moment, Mrs. Prue, and I'll show you your pupils." Mr. Leithwait rang the bell, and almost instantly childish voices and pattering feet were heard along the hall, the door burst open, and the children rushed in pell mell, unheeding his rebuking "Gently, gently, young savages"—such a trio of happy faces as one does not often see in a city. As the children discovered the strange lady, they hushed their noisy clatter, and stood bashfully awaiting an introduction, the little girl hiding behind her curls, the boys making an effort to look manly.

"This is your governess, Lillie," he said to the little girl. "Mrs. Prue, this is my little daughter, and my two sons, Charles and Henry."

Mrs. Prue held out her hand to them; and, won by the kindness of her smile, each child in turn placed their trusting little hands in hers.

"They have been sadly neglected, poor children," said Mr. Leithwait. "I have had so many young governesses, and they have all proved inefficient. The last one I had ran off with my butler, hence my advertisement for an elderly person. You will find these young savages sad romps, I am afraid, Mrs. Prue."

"Thee loves sport, does thee, dear?" asked Mrs. Prue, smiling upon Lillie. "That is natural; the young should be gay and happy."

"Then we shall expect to see you to-morrow morning at nine o'clock?" said Mr. Leithwait, and the interview was over.

An hour after, Prue Clifford went down from her room demurely enough, and prepared to set the tea table.

"Where have you been, Prue?" asked Amos.

"Oh, I've been everywhere," said Prue, animatedly. "I've seen the greatest amount of funny things. Amanda Gail's out in a lemon-colored shawl. Only think—and she had no gloves on, but every finger wore diamonds. I do think that oil runs to diamonds, as naturally as sparks fly upwards."

"Did you see Kate?"

"Yes, and I've to go there at nine every morning, and stay until evening; so grandmother you'll have to get dinner. I'll get it already for you to put on the table though."

"Me git dinner," growled the old lady. "Ain't it just as I said? Don't they make a slave and a kitchen slave on me. Git dinner indeed! When I was a gal I'd as soon a thought of cuttin' off my hand as askin' my grandmother to git dinner."

Here the old lady burst into a passion of tears, and rocked to and fro in distress.

Amos knit his brows.

"Kate must be careful," he said. "My sister doesn't hire out."

Prue put her pretty hand over his lips.

"Hush!" she said, playfully. "Kate is a dear good girl, and if I can assist her I shall do it. Clara wants a teacher now, and prefers her 'aunt Prue,' so I am in office as teacher. Now, Amos, put aside that ugly frown; for its far, far better to earn money honorably and enjoy it than to starve. We need money, brother, and here's a way open; so don't groan in that doleful way and shut your eyes, or I shall at once administer some rhubarb."

"I suppose it's got to be," he said, dubiously. "At any rate, it's better than that terrible thought you had awhile ago. I declare, Prue, I've been thinking ever since about it. Why, you shouldn't do it if both grandmother and I starved."

"Of course it's got to be," said Prue, replying to the first part of his sentence. "But here, let me prop you up for tea — there, that's comfortable — come, grandmother, here's tea, draw up your chair."

"Oh, oh, oh," groaned the old lady. "That it's come to me bein' called after my own grandson, and bein' told to 'draw up me cheer,' while me granddaughter never turns her hand. I wish to the gracious I was dead and gone, I do."

Days and weeks passed by, and Mr. Leithwait's gentle little Quaker governess continued to give the most perfect satisfaction. The children loved her and obeyed her accordingly. They were by no means angels — children never are excepting in books — but being healthy and happy and rosy, full of life and love, they were upon the whole very good children, and nestled

closely to the heart of the governess. Mr. Leithwait was delighted. He liked the quiet ways of the demure little old lady, and fell into the habit of occasionally dropping into the school-room to hear the children's recitations. On one occasion he happened to be there during the children's recreation-hour. The room was vacant; so he took his paper and quietly ensconced himself behind the heavy curtains of the bay-window to await the reassembling. He was deeply engrossed in reading, when suddenly a light quick step aroused him. It was too elastic and rapid for the gentle, slow step of Mrs. Prue; too regular and determined for any of the children. He was just on the point of ascertaining the intruder when a sweet gay voice rang out:

"Oh, you beauty, I'll catch you. How dare you come into a musty old schoolroom."

Then indeed he did look; and what was his surprise to see demure little Mrs. Prue chasing a butterfly about the room, like a schoolgirl — her little form all a quiver with excitement, and her frilled white cap bobbed about like a snowflake in a strong breeze. Over stool and desk and chairs she sprang lightly, reaching laughingly after the little creature who seemed cunningly to lead her on. Mr. Leithwait shut his teeth hard together, lest he should laugh outright at the spry old lady as she bobbed about, flashing her white neckerchief in every corner of the room but the bay-window. Probably the little butterfly did not like the dusky curtains but he finally, with a tantalizing flutter, opened his pretty sails in the blue deep of the sky, and Mrs. Prue, panting and exhausted, laughed to herself.

"Oh, wouldn't it look funny to see me racing after that butterfly in this dress? I wish there'd been plenty of glasses in this room, so that I could have seen myself. Oh dear, I'm tired to death. Prue, Prue, who ever heard of a middle-aged Quaker lady chasing a butterfly and jumping over chair backs?"

A light step sounded; and nothing could be more unlike the quick, clear voice which had spoken than Mrs. Prue's gentle "Lillie, dear, hadn't thee better come to thy lesson now? Where are Charles and Harry?"

"Coming," said Lillie, "but, Mrs. Prue, how red your cheeks are, and your eyes are just as bright. What makes them?"

“The reflection from thine, perhaps,” was the smiling answer.

In the racket of the boys' reappearance as they came stamping in, Mrs. Prue did not observe Mr. Leithwait slipping silently out and it was not long afterward that she was aware that her undignified chase had been observed. That evening Mr. Leithwait was guilty of following his governess home, and he was further guilty of stopping a few doors below and asking who lived in the brown frame house on the corner.

“The Cliffords, sir,” said his informant who happened to be a little inclined to gossip. “They're nice people in the main, sir, though Amos do hold his head a little higher'n there's any use for. He's a machinist, sir. Had his foot crushed some time since; and what with that and fever and sore throat, he ain't been out o' his bed for the matter o' four months. Just as soon as he gets well over one thing, another strikes in, and so it goes.”

“Are there many in the family?”

“Only him and his sister Prue and the old grandmother, who, I must say it, sir, if she's your own mother's born sister, which, I hope, she ain't, is the aggravatingest old imp and the crossest old bag of bones 'at ever lived. Now, there's Prue. Why, she's a born angel, sir. I go in now and make their bread and sit with Amos; for Prue's got something or other to keep her out the best part o' every day but Saturday, and I never heard her say a cross word to that old she, though I've been on the point o' shakin' her a dozen times, I do vow she's been that aggrevatin'.”

Having gleaned this information, Mr. Leithwait went home. After that evening, there was always a funny laugh in Mr. Leithwait's eyes when he looked at Mrs. Prue; and yet, did she happen to glance up, he was as grave as a bishop. He went oftener to the schoolroom, and began taking an interest in Lillie's music, more during her practise hour. And Mrs. Prue, her cheek grew to redden at his approach, and in spite of the powder (which she certainly used) would have a little sea-shell tint of pink. She grew more distant to him, and her gentle thee and thou were oftener addressed to the children than to him. But he took such an unbounded interest in the schoolroom and was there so much, that Mrs. Prue grew ac-

customed to him, and lost some light in her smile if he were missing.

One evening — it was getting late — the children had been dismissed, and Mrs. Prue arose to don her bonnet and close school when Mr. Leithwait said:

“Don’t hurry, Mrs. Prue; come look at this gorgeous sunset with me.”

“Thee knows it is getting late, and I must be going,” said Mrs. Prue, advancing to the window as she donned her prim little shawl. “It is beautiful; but I must say farewell or I shall be late.”

“I will see you home, Mrs. Prue.”

“No. I should dislike to inconvenience thee. I am not afraid.”

Mrs. Prue turned to leave the room, but a single word suddenly arrested her.

“Miss Clifford,” — she started and turned — “sit down,” he said more gently. “I know it all, the whole story, and believe me I was surprised to find so strong a heroine in the demure little Quakeress.”

Mrs. Prue buried her face in her hands, then impulsively burst out crying:

“You think that I’m an artful, deceitful hypocrite. I know you do,” she sobbed; “and you’re going to send me away as I ought to be sent, for I am not a hateful old Quakeress, and I wouldn’t be for anything.”

She paused for want of breath, and Mr. Leithwait said:

“My dear Miss Clifford, don’t be alarmed, for I don’t think anything of the kind; and I’ll never send you away if you will stay, for I have the highest regard for you as a woman and a teacher, and above all” (here Mr. Leithwait laughed a little) “do I appreciate your celerity and success in catching butterflies.”

Poor Prue! That was too much. She was on the verge of a good cry, when suddenly the thought of the ludicrous picture she must have made occurred to her, and she laughed. Such a hearty, ringing laugh, that in its cadence all embarrassment died away, and she spoke calmly enough after a few moments.

“It is due to myself and to you, Mr. Leithwait, to account

so far as I can for this singular freak of mine. I will do so briefly. I needed money. There was no offer which promised so much remuneration as yours. I accepted, trusting to luck to prevent being discovered. Now that you have made the discovery, I at once resign my place!" Ugh, removing her bonnet with disgust—"hateful old thing." Mr. Leithwait offered to see his quondam governess home, and I don't know how it was—whether the way was longer than usual, or they had taken the "long path," but certain it is, Amos was working himself in a fever at the long delay of his sister's return and the old grandmother was sobbing aloud, and declaring "that she allus told 'Lizy that child 'ud die young, and she knew jest as well as if she'd a seen it that she'd been stabbed and throwed in the river. She knew she was dead. Oh, oh, oh!" when the door opened, and Amos saw, to his joy, Prue safe and unharmed, but in such a funny Quaker dress, and attended by a gentleman.

"There!" ejaculated the old lady, mopping up her tears indignantly with her handkerchief. "Didn't I tell you she'd come back safe enough? Didn't I tell you she'd been up to some mischief or other, and 'ud come home soon enough. But I'm nobody. You never mind me. You wish I'd die; I know you do, and I'm sure I wish I could, to oblige ye, that's all."

Here the violence of the old lady's grief permitted Amos to be heard.

"Where have you been, Prue, and where did you get that absurd dress?"

She came into the light, then, and spreading out her dress with both hands, made him a very low bow, saying by way of introduction:

"Please, Sir, it's the queer little old mouse upstairs that I laughed at."

She looked so droll that Amos laughed too, and when Prue introduced Mr. Leithwait, of course he was not very grave, at which the old lady, looking at Prue through her tears, cried out:

"Prudence Clifford; them's your mother's things—your mother's 'ts dead and gone, and little did I ever think I'd live to see Lizzie's gal laughin' at her dead mother's dresses. But I knowed it would be so; I told Lizzie on her dyin' bed how it 'ud be."

Prue soothed the irritable old lady, and having induced Mr. Leithwait to sit down, slipped upstairs from which she shortly returned in her own neat little brown dress, with its dainty linen collar, and the prettiest of blushes upon her face. Evidently, Mr. Leithwait and Amos, who had been able to sit up in his easy-chair, had been exchanging confidences, for the eyes of both were shining when she went in, and Amos said tenderly:

“Come here, little sister.”

She went to him half-shyly, and kneeling by his side, put her shining little head upon his knee. He lifted it between his hands, looking gravely into the sweet eyes, said:

“Mr. Leithwait has told me your secret, Prue, and his — you are a dear girl, darling, and I suppose my ‘no’ would in this instance, amount to as much as it did when you had the grace to ask my consent about the advertisement; therefore I need not say it. What shall I say?”

Prue hid her face in her hands, and said shyly:

“If thee pleases I would rather hear yes.”

Of course, the word being easy of pronunciation, was spoken, and Mr. Leithwait took tea with them, at which the grandmother asked him “if he meant to eat them out of house and home, and then stay an’ see ’em starve anyhow, and she wished she was dead.” Then Prue saw the old lady to her room, and after that the two spent a happy evening.

Two months later, there was a quiet wedding at St. James. The witnesses were an old lady, and three happy rosy children, who clung to the hand of a gentleman leaning on a crutch, and the bride and groom were none other than Mr. Leithwait and his quondam Quaker governess, who said sweetly as she passed out from the church, in a reply to a whisper from him:

“I hope I shall be able to please thee.”

“Prue, Prue, dear little Prue!” sighed the gentleman on the crutch. “For myself I weep. I could almost regret you went governessing, since it has cost me a sister, and our house its sunshine.”

“And I allus said,” groaned the old lady, “’at ’Lizy’s children ’ud desert me and leave me to die in the work’us, an’ so they will. O miserable me!”

But Amos cleared his face, Prue caught her husband's smile; and after all, the demure little governess was not so very demure, and the old lady was not so miserable, seeing that a handsome box of snuff from the bridegroom so made her sneeze, that she forgot to groan.

As for the rosy children, they insisted upon "Mama Prue" putting on her Quaker dress again; "For," said they, "you look so good in it."

For the *New York Mercury*, June 23, 1866.

RENTING A HUSBAND

"Wanted to rent — A convenient house, pleasantly situated; must contain at least six rooms, and be within ten minutes' walk of the North School. An immediate occupant will be found by addressing S. F. Rivard, Macomb Street, No. 25."

This advertisement was not to me the simple, commonplace affair that it seems to you; not by any means. It was achieved after a great deal of thought and by a great deal of labor. First, there was the time before I could decide that our present quarters were intolerable and must be changed. I think the fact of finding a piece of Mrs. Green's fine comb in the soup, finally decided me that this was not the *ne plus ultra* of boarding-places. Be that as it might, I did decide, and then wasted a semi-quire of Gummes' best "cream-laid" before my advertisement arrived at its fullest and briefest perfection. I erased and interpolated; condensed to the last degree of brevity, not that it might be "the soul of wit," but that my slender purse might be spared an extra twinge. I paused occasionally to wonder how it would look in print, and whether I should not feel honored at the publicity. I am no litterateur, and until that eventful time had never written my name in a more ambitious place than in a four-page letter to Harry, when I was always very careful to dot my I's and cross my t's lest he should think me rustic. Ah me, ah me! This commonplace advertisement was the bridge which spanned the past; and leaning my tired head upon my desk, my adventurous feet crossed over, touching again with familiar sound the shores of

“auld lang syne,” the time when life was flower-crowned and sorrow seemed forever dead. How neatly I used to sign my name to those letters to Harry, “Saloma.” What else was there? Ah, yes, I remember now. It was always “Your true Saloma.” I never changed the endings of those letters, for I had a fancy that their sameness should be to him a little type of that unchanging love which I had given him. He was the son of a neighboring-farmer; and, being a fine, manly fellow, I used to feel very proud to have him come in, as he did before he went to college, night after night, and sit in front of the great old glowing fireplace, listening to father’s dry old jokes — which the dear old gentleman repeats still every night with the greatest faith in their perpetual freshness and brilliancy — and yet always having his face in sunshine for me and a sly hand for stray curls. Those were happy times when, boy and girl, we stood “where the brook and river meet.” That night I looked at the picture of myself and of the other through blinding tears.

Well, Harry was ambitious; and Mr. Lee, being a well-to-do man, and having but one son, sent him to college. After that, I saw him only at holidays, but the slender fetter on my hand bound us heart to heart, and tender letters kept the watchfires burning. I cannot tell the day when Harry’s visits began to grow less longed for and less pleasant than they used to be; but that time came, as was most natural, since Harry was constantly improving in education and refinement; while I, a simple country girl, was standing still. Sometimes he would say, with a sigh, “Ah, Saloma! The dear old days are gone forever!” and fell to watching the blazing fire with a sober and thoughtful face. I noticed, too, that he listened to father’s jokes a little less patiently, and that his face was not always in sunshine for me. He grew petulant and fault-finding, telling me that Miss Stevens did so and so, until my quick temper would blaze from my eyes and silence him.

This state of things could not last very long. I was a continual shock to his new-found refinement, and he was to my proud sensitiveness. I think we acted upon each other as two electric machines of equal power and equally charged. But the finale came. One evening, as usual, Harry was sitting by the

fire, and I was opposite him, embroidering his initials on some handkerchiefs, when suddenly he said:

"I wish, Saloma, that you'd manage some way to do up your hair; I don't like to see it all in a tangle about your shoulders like that!"

"My curls "all in a tangle like that!"

My curls which I had prized because his hands had smoothed them and his eyes loved them — which I had curled that very afternoon when I was tired, solely to please him! Tears sprang to my eyes.

"Oh, Harry!" I faltered, "you used to like them so much; but —" indignation getting the better of my sorrow — "I reckon Miss Stevens don't wear curls!"

Harry's face had softened under the first part of the sentence; but before I had finished it he looked grimly at me, and then, replied petulantly: "There it is again! You reckon! Saloma, don't, I beg of you, ever use that expression again. It's so low."

"You used to use it!" I retorted; "and your mother 'reckons' every sentence she utters!"

Harry's face flushed.

"We cannot expect old folks to improve much!" he replied; "but I will not have my future wife 'reckoning' and 'guessing' like a down-east plow-boy!"

"What's that about the plow-boy?" asked father, looking up from his paper. "I'll tell you a good one about a boy who drove a plow in Washton. He —"

"Father, I think I hear the colt out in the barn. Will you see?"

Of course, the dear old gentleman went; and with a regret that I must send him on a vain errand, I closed the door, and standing by it, said:

"Now, Harry, I am willing to hear all that you have to say!"

"There is nothing more, Saloma, only I want you to be careful of your hands; they're quite callous inside, Saloma, indeed they are — and dress, too. You must dress more as becomes my future wife!"

"Your future wife may dress as she pleases!" I replied

calmly and steadily, "and I shall dress as I please! That my hands are callous are my glory, not my shame; since a dear old father, unfit for work, is made more comfortable by them. 'That they are unfit to be joined to yours, I thank you for showing me!'"

I slipped the ring from my finger, and as it touched his hand, he sprang back as though it had burnt him. It fell to the floor, and he ground his heel upon it.

"You are in earnest in this?" he asked, under his breath.

"Yes, in bitter earnest, Harry Lee!" I replied. "If you are not satisfied with me now when you see me once in three months, I reckon you wouldn't if you saw me every day!"

Harry's lip curled, as I knew it would when I used the word.

"You'll repent it!" said he. "You'll repent it yet, Saloma! And, by Heaven! when you want me next you'll engage me yourself! I'm no man to go mad about a woman, I can tell you! You'll marry me yet — you know you will!"

"Yes," I replied, under my breath from anger. "When I engage you of my own free will, I'll marry you; then, and not till then!"

"As you please," he replied. "Until you do, rest assured we are strangers."

With those cruel words on his lips, he went out, and I heard his young hasty, quick steps crunching the dead leaves in the path; and then, listening with my whole heart, I heard father's voice:

"What, Harry, going so soon? and you haven't heard my joke about the plow boy yet."

I did not catch his reply, though I tried very hard; for even at that moment the sound of his voice was dearer than any other music in the world; but he was gone. I heard the gate close, and it clanged on my shivering heart. I gathered up the bits of ring and put them out of sight. I sent his letters to him that same night, but he never sent mine; and so the springtime of my life fell suddenly into scorching summer.

After Harry left, I roused myself to a full understanding of my position. I comprehended that he was advancing constantly in refinement and culture, while I was retrograding; and I saw that he must have left me just as surely and naturally as the swift-winged lark out-soars the slower robin.

Seeing this, my heart lost its anger and yearned for the old love. I determined to fit myself for his companionship. I could not leave father or I should have immured myself in a convent until I could burst the chrysalis and appear as a beautiful butterfly. This being impossible, I engaged teachers, paying them by many hard labors and close economies, and began my education in earnest.

Four years passed, and then I sold the farm, and father and I went to live in town. Unlike most old people, he longed for change, and was happy as a child when we were comfortably settled in a boarding-house, and I had a situation in one of the public schools at a living salary.

During all these years, I heard but once of Harry. That was when we broke up housekeeping. Harry's mother came over and told me that he was married, and had bought a place in Italy.

"His bride is an Italian, Saloma," she added, reproachfully. "I always hoped my boy would mate nearer home; but I ain't to blame, Saloma, and let them as is take it to heart."

Married then, and to an Italian. I wore the crown of thorns upon throbbing brows. I knew that he would never seek me again, but oh! the thought of his having forgotten me was terrible. Hope in my heart folded her wings and died, and I came out of the affliction a sobered, saddened woman. I put forever away the curls his hand had touched, and smiled to think that he would never find fault with them again. Six years passed, leaden-footed, beating their slow, regular tramp over the path of my heart, like a gang of reluctant criminals urged on by stronger powers, and brought me to the night when I sat with my head upon my desk and dreaming, and my advertisement for improved quarters achieved. Two days passed, and then I received three notes in reply to the notice. I was glad of this, for father could always tell his jokes best in a dry room (this was very damp), and was not partial to Mrs. Green's soups.

The notes all described houses pleasantly situated and convenient beyond description; so the following morning being Saturday, I determined to see for myself those unparalleled houses.

Among the notes there was one written on a little white paper

in a tiny, cramped hand, but perfectly neat, which somehow pleased me more than either of the others. To my great delight, Saturday morning dawned clear and bright for I dread house-hunting only second to advertising, and needed all the sunshine of heaven to make it bearable.

I put on my bonnet, smiling cheerfully at the silver thread I saw in my brown hair; kissed father, and started on my tour of inspection.

"Hurry back, Saloma," called father after me. "I've a capital one to tell you."

A brief walk brought me to the first house on my list. Taking a survey of the external appearance, I summed up at once: "Fence down, windows broken, steps falling, spouts hanging loose, shutters dilapidated, and front door off hinge." Not thinking it worth while to penetrate further into the "comfortable convenient house," I shook my head at the note and turned my steps to the second one. It was certainly an improvement, outwardly; I rang the bell, and a frowsy-headed maid-of-all-work answered it; replying with an ungracious assent to my desire to see the house. I will not declare the disqualifications which I discovered there for comfortable living, suffice it to say that nothing but a fish could live comfortably there, since the cellar was full of water from broken sewers, and the house, from faulty roofs, was equally damp. I was bowed out by the scowling upper-servant, who maliciously banged the door upon my parasol handle, and then protested that she didn't see it; and weary of heart and foot, went to the last house on my list. When I saw it my heart leaped gladly, but sank again the lower for having leaped, when I thought what must be the rent. It was a gothic house, clean as a pin, and fresh as the morning. There was a bay-window looking toward the west, and in it an easy arm-chair. The very seat for father, I thought. He always watched the sun set. The lawn was like velvet, and rare tube-roses laid their blushing cheeks lovingly against the lattice. There was a grapery at the rear, and already the wine-red lips of the tender clusters were lifted to the sunshine.

Drawing a sigh that all this luxury must be beyond my reach, I ascended the steps and pulled the bell.

It was answered at once by a little cramped old lady, who I

knew at once had written the cramped, quaint little note. She was so perfectly neat in her black alpaca and white cap, and had so quiet a smile upon her face, that I involuntarily returned her smile of welcome without marveling why she should welcome me.

"I'll show you the house," she said. "Come in, Miss Rivard."

She led the way through the house to the parlors; such elegant, cozy parlors they were; so suited to my quiet taste, that I felt as though a loving hand had fitted them for me alone. On the low marble mantels two or three exquisite alabaster statues stood on their creamy pedestals, and between them, vases of rare flowers; pure lily cups circled by flaming verbenas, and, most lovely of all, a single white camelia blushing in the scarlet setting of geraniums. In this room, as in every room in the house, I noticed a little bouquet of Venus's flytrap set in a circle of arbor-vitae. Pausing once to wonder at the taste which should select so odd a flower, I asked the little, old lady if she arranged them. "Thy friend till death. Have I caught you at last?" I repeated, dreamily.

"Law, Miss," said the little old lady, "I don't know the language. It's happened so."

I understood afterward how it was, but not then.

We went through the house. Everywhere I saw that same congeniality of taste between the person who had furnished the house and myself. I liked rare quiet pictures, full of the inspiration of Heaven, and here were just such. I liked easy-chairs and graceful drapery, and all were as it should be. "Did you furnish this house?" I asked of the little old lady.

She started. "I — yes — no —, that is, my son John did."

"What is this room?" I asked, opening a closed door.

The old lady hastily stepped in before me, and gathering up a pair of boots and an odd slipper, smuggled them in a closet. When she looked at me she was blushing.

"It's John's room, ma'am," she apologised; "and he's forgot to put his things away. Boys will be boys, ma'am, even after they're grown men."

Supposing that she was embarrassed, because I had seen the room disordered, I changed the subject.

"What do you ask for the house?"

"Three hundred a year."

"Furnished as it is?"

"Just as it is, ma'am. Not a thing disturbed. Is that too much?" deprecatingly.

"You mean house and furniture for three hundred?"

"Johnny said for the house and its appurtenances, which I suppose is the furniture, ma'am; but if that's too much —" hesitating, "it'll go to somebody else. Just as you please, ma'am."

"I'll take the house."

"Just as it is?"

"Just as it is."

The little old lady laughed, then spat her little bird's-claws of hands together, and laughed again.

I began to think I had said a very silly thing, or a very good one; but she seemed to enjoy the joke all the more at my astonishment.

"Why do you laugh?" said I. "Is the house haunted?"

"Never saw a ghost, here."

"Am I cheated in taking the house?"

"It's dear rented for six hundred, ma'am."

"Why do you offer it for three hundred, then?"

The little old lady colored and stammered.

"Why you see, ma'am, we — that is I and John — had a fancy that the house best be let where there are no children. We don't care much for the rent. That's all, Miss Rivard. I think you'll take good care of the house. So if you wouldn't mind putting down on paper, that you have engaged the house for next year, I'll be obliged."

The old lady led me into the library with a great deal of anxious fluttering, which reminded me of a mother-bird, and gave me paper and pen.

"What shall I write here?" I asked.

"Only say that you engage the house and everything in it just as it stands, for one year, at three hundred dollars, and sign your name."

The little old lady surreptitiously clapped her hands behind her back when she thought I wasn't looking, and turned away

her face to laugh. Thoroughly convinced that she was demented, I said:

"Except yourself, you mean?"

"Oh yes: except myself, of course."

"When can I have possession?"

"To-morrow, if you like."

"I've said I'll take the house. What's the use of writing this?"

The little old lady suddenly brought her hands together before her, and said severely:

"Just as you please, ma'am. Of course, if you don't want the house, you needn't take it; but I never let it to any one without a written engagement."

I didn't like this turn of affairs, so I said, soothingly:

"I'll write it. Here begins.—'I, Saloma Rivard, spinster, do solemnly swear — (no, that's wrong) — do solemnly engage this house and all its appurtenances, great and small.'"

"And all it contains," interrupted the little old lady.

"'And all it contains, for the space of one year, at the rent of three hundred dollars. Signed this seventh day of August, 18—.

" 'Saloma Tracy Rivard, spinster.'

"There; how's that?"

"There ain't any way you could creep out of it, is there?"

"No."

"That'll do, then. But, ma'am, hadn't I best keep house for you? I'm used to the ways of the house, and hate to leave it."

"No," I said, "I must get a maid for about six dollars; I can't afford a housekeeper."

"I'll stay for that money. You see," hesitatingly, "my son'll be from home, and I'd be best here, and I can't be idle very well."

"Stay for that? You?"

"Yes, may I?"

"I'll try you," I said.

The old lady put the engagement, as she called it, in her

bosom, laughing behind her hand, which she changed into a cough when she caught my eye. She saw me to the door, and said "good-morning." When I reached the street corner I turned, and I am positive that I saw her laughing and clapping her hands behind the parlor-windows. I walked home, somewhat uneasy about my facetious housekeeper, and vainly trying to find the source of her amusement. What could be there about my renting a house already furnished which was so laughable, I could not determine. Reaching my boarding-house at length, tired and hungry, I dismissed the little old lady and her mirth from my thoughts.

Father kept me busy for the remainder of the day describing the house and furniture, liking best of all that easy-chair drawn up in the bay-window. "I've seen the sun set every night for seventy years, Saloma," he said; "and please God, I'll see it every night until I die."

On Monday morning I was up at dawn, in my impatience to get to our new house, and leave father comfortably settled before I left for school, at nine o'clock. As for him, he was so eager to assist me, that he disarranged as fast as I could arrange; but at last the trunks were strapped and put on the dray. Mrs. Green was paid; and father and I, to save time, indulged in a ride to our new house. Our housekeeper met us at the door, smiling a welcome, and neat as a pin. She ushered us into the parlor, already warmed, for it was a chill morning; and I noticed, when I entered the apartment, that a meerschaum was lying on the mantelpiece, but this the little old lady smuggled into her pocket before I could glance a second time, muttering to herself that she had not cleaned up, since we were earlier than she expected.

"Where is your son, John?" I asked surprisedly, for I observed that the little marble centre-table was in a perfect flush, because of the rosy fly-traps hedged in with cedar. Every bell seemed to sing out to my astonished senses: "Ha! ha! have I caught you at last; have I caught you?"

The old lady was absolutely shaking with laughter, but when I turned, she remarked, in a matter-of-fact tone, that she was shaking from cold, and that John was at his work.

"Does he sleep here?"

"Oh no, ma'am; only since the owners have gone!"

"I thought you said he owned the house?"

"He; oh no, ma'am. It's a gentleman from New York, I think."

Not caring to argue the little old lady into a story somewhat more connected, I sat down to enjoy the luxurious abode which fortune had tossed over my head, and to wonder about that very remarkable son, John, who was so uncommon a character. As for father, he had taken immediate possession of the easy-chair in the bay; and when I went to school I left him there still telling the little old lady "the best one that he ever got off once at a club-meeting."

After school, I had my dinner. The little old lady proved a very queen of cooks; and then amused myself by going over every nook and corner of my new home, excepting one, that was the room that I had seen the boots on the floor. That door was locked; I applied to the housekeeper for the key, but she was under the impression that John must have taken it off in his pocket, and I must wait until he returned it. This, slight as it was, bothered me. I was tortured by the air of mystery about the woman and the place. She was the best of housekeepers, and apparently the gentlest of women; but I couldn't make her stories agree, and I didn't like her hesitating about answering simple questions; and above all I hated her surreptitiously clapping her hands behind my back, and chuckling over some inward joke. I noticed this particularly one night, when I had been domiciled for a week. We were sitting at the table, and she was pouring out the tea, when a sudden, stealthy man's step sounded on the walk outside. It was as though a man was walking on tiptoe. The little old lady started suddenly, muttered something about the tea being too strong, and went to the kitchen. Listening, I heard the supposed sound of voices; one was a man's; and then all was still. The little old lady came in with the tea, and quietly resumed her seat and duties.

"Who was that?" I asked.

"My son, John," was the reply, given with an inexpressible laugh.

"Did he bring the key?" I asked.

"I don't know — I think so."

"Well, get it for me."

"Yes, ma'am."

At that the little old lady put down her cup and went off in a burst of laughter, clapping her hands and stamping her little feet most vehemently. I laid down fork and bread and looked at her. Tears were rolling down her cheeks and she was almost out of breath.

"Oh, I must have it out," she ejaculated between bursts. "Never mind, ma'am; but — Oh, my — it is too good — and the last," and was completely swamped in the next fit.

"What's the matter with her?" asked father. "Has she thought of a good 'un'? Let's have it, madam. Laugh and grow fat's my maxim, I tell a joke occasionally."

I tried to annihilate the little old lady by the sternness of my eyes.

"What ails you?" I asked severely. "Are you subject to spasms?"

With that she laughed again, and then wiping the tears from her eyes, said humbly, "I beg your pardon, Madam, but I was so glad to see my son; it's most turned my head I think."

"Quite, I think," I returned, determined upon being severe.

"Father, you must have some oysters in my room to-night," said the little old lady. "John has invited two or three friends, and brought some oysters, and I want you to tell them some of your good jokes."

Oysters and jokes! Could any lively old gentleman stand the temptation, when he could be in his own house? Father couldn't.

"Ay, ay! I'll be happy to come," said father, "if Saloma won't be lonely."

"Oh, she'll not be lonely; and I'll come for you at eight o'clock, as you don't know the way of the house yet."

Father was pleased at the invitation; so I put on him a clean collar, and brushed up his coat, and at the appointed hour passed him over to the care of the little old lady to pilot downstairs. I observed that she was literally shaking with laughter when she took him off, but I was sure she would be careful of him.

Once alone, I drew my curtains and stirred up my fire until the firelight spirits came in a troupe and danced upon my carpets and wall, weaving their fantastic, mazy circles in a thousand graceful figures. But for me there was less spiritual work than watching these weird dancers. I resolutely turned my back to them, and settled down to correcting a set of compositions. I was totally engrossed in a long effusion, regarding a certain walk in the garden which the young genius had taken, when he had seen the little lambs skipping and the flowers blooming very nice, when suddenly I was conscious of some one being in the room. I had heard no sound, but my inner consciousness could have taken oath that another soul within that room had lately supplied its presence; and now my startled ears took in a faint, faint sound, but to me more terrible than the clangor of a thousand bells. It was some one breathing.

My pencil slid from my hand; the coward blood from my face. I dared not lift my eyes or move, so sure was I that some other one was in the room.

“Saloma! Saloma!”

Ay, surely I knew the ring of that dear voice. Deepened in tone, it might be; but down from the far-off past it came to me, and answered in its ring to this. I sprang up with a cry, and stood face to face with the speaker. A tall, bearded man, with a broad, white brow. Ah, surely I knew that brow; those eyes — surely, surely, the picture in my heart was the true photograph of his face, sun-browned by age. Back along the path of memory my swift feet, fairy-sandaled flew, and I knew that this was Harry — Harry Lee — my Harry who had listened to father’s jokes in the old farm kitchen, and had his face in sunshine for me. He offered his two hands now, and I put mine in them. Then he eagerly scanned my face, and bending, kissed me.

“For the sake of the old pledge, Saloma,” he said.

“Where did you come from?” I gasped. “How did you get here?”

“I came from Reed’s Hotel,” he replied, smiling. “Your door was slightly ajar, and I came in.”

I offered him a chair and he sat down, keeping his eyes on my face. As I turned toward him I saw that the centre-table was

heaped with flowers, just as it had been the first day when I entered the parlor.

"Did you bring the flowers?"

"Folks first, flowers afterward," he replied.

"You are not changed, Saloma, not much changed, only your face is sadder."

"I slept and dreamed that life was beauty,
I woke, and found that life was duty."

I said gravely.

"And you?" his brow darkened. "I, oh, I've found that the world's a rose with a worm in the heart. I have traveled for seven years, and now, like Noah's dove, I have come back to the ark of safety."

"Where is your wife?" I asked, softly, dreading even to hear her name from his lips. I know not why.

The smile died from his face.

"She was a Southern child," he said, simply, "and is dead. I buried her in Italy; she and little Saloma."

Tears sprang to my eyes. He had had then a little Saloma.

"Now," he said, gently, "I want to talk with you. Are you still a little Puritan?"

"Just the same."

"And you always keep your promise?"

"When I can."

"Do you remember how we parted?"

Did I remember it? Did the Egyptians remember that last day of sunshine before the terrible plague of darkness blotted it from their straining eyes?

"Yes, I remember."

"Saloma, I have been true to the foolish vow made then, until you of your own free will renewed our engagement. I never came."

There was a tremble in his eyes which I thought ill-timed. The indignant blood dyed my face.

"I renew our engagement?" I cried. "I seek you, Harry Lee! From the night you went out from the old home kitchen I do solemnly tell you that I have never by word or line sought you, or renewed any engagement that was broken then."

"If you had not, I should not have been here," said Harry.

"Then you had better go at once, for I never have."

"Saloma! Saloma! I have your note in my pocket here. How can you deny it?"

"My note!"

He drew from his pocket-book, with the most provoking nonchalance, a small note, and passed it to me. I opened it, and found but the note I had written for the little old lady, relative to taking the house.

"The joke is harder to comprehend than the poorest of Lord Dundreary's," I remarked, as he laughed; "I shall have to ask you to explain."

"Why, Saloma, don't you see? Can't you understand? Oh, you dumb little thing. Don't the Venus flytraps and the arbovitae tell the story? I was afraid they'd let me out. Didn't you engage the house and all that was in it?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Well, you dear little goose, I happened to be in it, and my boots came near betraying me, too. You engaged me with the other furniture. Don't you see, Saloma?"

Of course, I saw, and joined in the laugh against myself, heartily.

"And you will not break your promise?"

To this I made no answer.

"How did it all happen — tell me all, please."

So he told the story.

"When I left you, Saloma, I was angry and proud, and certain that I hated you; but I didn't, Saloma. Well, before my course was finished, I met a young Italian girl. I married her, I can scarcely tell why. I knew that you were lost to me. We went to Italy, and there our little girl was born, and died. We had not been happy, my wife and I; but when the little one died, it softened our hearts, and I watched her fading away with an aching heart. When we had been married three years, she died. I laid her by the child, and left Italy. For the next four years I wandered about, speculating with an indifferent rashness that made my future, and caring little for life or death. Last December, at Havana, I fell ill. I was very ill indeed, and my thoughts, like carrier-doves, flew home. I heard your

voice, and saw you, and I think it was that which drew me back from death. Darling, the fever left me and I came back home. I went to the old place, and saw my father and mother. Then I traced you here; but, remembering my oath, was too proud to seek you. I bought this house, and furnished it as I thought you would like it, and every day I saw you at a distance. At last fortune favored me. Your advertisement gave me a cue. I took my housekeeper into confidence. She nursed me at Havana, and loves me dearly; and I instructed her to offer the house at such a rate as you would be likely to accept — the house, just as it was.

“And now, petite, since you have rented me for one year, of your own free will, if you will change that lease for a lifelong one, put your hand in mine and tell me so.”

It was all necromancy. I was certainly mesmerized, for I obeyed him to the letter, feeling glad to lose the independence of the woman in the simple trust of the child. The little old lady came in with father, then, and had her laugh out. I fully expected to see her vanish into thin air in one of those gusts of merriment. And then she told the story to father, and he has repeated it every night since, as the best and freshest joke he knows.

As for Harry and me, we are happy as the day is long, and I have never regretted renting the house just as it was, although Harry protests that I ought to pay my rent more regularly than I do.

Father, sitting in the easy-chair, watching the sun set, begs to know of the boy on his knees, if he happens to know that his father was formerly rented out at three hundred a year, wants to know if he don't see the joke — which, of course, my cherub don't see, but laughs and crows nevertheless, until grandpa smothers him with kisses; and Harry, looking over his paper, says:

“I rather think, Saloma, that father has a joke this time which will never grow old. Wasn't it capital?”

For the *New York Mercury*. September 15, 1866.

ERNEST BELL'S "REASONS"

GIVEN BY HIMSELF, AND THEREFORE AUTHENTIC

I, John Ernest Bell, bachelor, and a very earnest bachelor I am, have been plagued, and teased, and tormented, until in self-defense I take up this weapon mightier than the sword.

You must know that my name is "Ernest Bell," among my mother's friends — "Ernie Bell" sometimes, but among the boys it is simply "Bell," "John Bell," or sometimes even "Jack Bell." I am thus explicit because "thereby hangs a tale." I am not frightfully homely, nor, I am convinced, am I a beauty, being too short and fleshy for an Apollo. Then as to hyacinthine locks, I haven't very many of any sort, but those I have are sandy, and fringe a little bald spot on my head. I don't know when it first came there. I have been told I was bald when a baby in arms; but this I cannot vouch for, since I always wore caps. I am good-natured, and hold to the maxim that the world owes me a living; consequently, I never wear ugly wrinkles under my eyes, nor tighten the curves about my mouth by trying to squeeze a living from it. And as an equal sequence, I am not by any means poor. Dame Fortune, like all feminines, is more likely to favor those who treat her indifferently; and as she is the only woman I ever could be indifferent to, so it seems she is the only one who has not in some measure been false to me.

Well, I have had an easy life. My brow has never bent to any heavier care than an ill-fitting hat; and they tell me my eyes are just as clear and blue as a baby's. That I consider rather a compliment, since I love babies, even the hook-nosed, keen-eyed caricature of a baby which belongs to the people opposite. And now I come to the grand question which has been agitating my mind for years.

"Bell," says old Skeefles, who has been unfortunate in speculation, and married a rich wife; "why don't you marry? Take my advice — marry a rich girl. There's Cerintha Ann —"

"Jack," bursts out my honest, frank chum, "don't be a fool. Let women alone." (Chum's wife ran off with a better looking man last year.)

"Ernest," says Aunt Catherine, sighing — "marry some fair angel, and learn to enjoy life, dear boy."

"O dear, Mr. Bell," simpers Angelina, leaning lovingly on my arm (Angelina's old enough to talk plainly, I should think. I could speak as plain as father at two years old, and I'm sure she's older than that twice told); "why can't you marry? I know that many deah geirls" (she says "geirls") "would devote their whole existence to your comfort."

"Bell," says Peter Clat, who has tried it; "marry, if you must, but, for the good Laud's sake, don't marry a rich woman. I've been there."

Now what's a man to do? I want to oblige them all — I like to oblige, but how can I marry a rich woman and a poor one, and not marry at all? I don't see my way clear. And so I concluded I would just tell my story, and let them all judge of my reasons for being so disobliging in this one matter.

It was Christmas evening, I think. Why, I know it was Christmas-eve, for I stopped to pat some children on the head, who were looking at Christmas toys in the shop-window, when I went home out of humor. I don't know whether it was the bright eyes of those blessed children or the natural gloominess of the day which made me so, but I was "out of sorts." I banged the door of my room, and heard the caustic old-maid of No. 13 remark above her breath to caustic old-maid No. 15:

"Dear me, Lavina, I should think Mrs. Slack ought to charge old Bell" (old Bell, indeed) "a dollar extra for the use of that door. I believe another month'll wear it out."

Now I was not in the habit of slamming my door, and never had been, so I felt that the remark was undeserved; but I resolved to forget it — for, said I, what has Ernest Bell to do with care on Christmas-eve? Christmas-eve! Ah, surely. At thought of it my heart stirred softly like a bird on its nest, and I sat down languidly and lonesomely in my easy-chair. It was a cheerless room, I thought, and yet there was nothing cheerless about it. The carpet was rich, and soft, and bright-tinted, and the shadowy crimson curtains fell in full folds from the gilded cornicing. My chair was easy, and from the grate the glowing anthracite sent up its cheerful flames, but there was no trace of a loving hand in its arrangement. The

beautiful vases were unfilled, my slippers peeped from their case, my dressing-gown from the closet; there was no trace of dear careless fingers, no sign of loving companionable disorder. I would have given all I was worth to have felt the touch of a loving hand and the thousand nameless signs of a dear one's presence.

Looking into the coals that silent Christmas Eve, my thoughts flew backward until I heard my mother call me as of old, "My darling boy! Ernie, my darling boy!" They were her last words, borne to me faintly, as if she were half-way across the deep, dark river and her loving soul had turned again to waft me that loving name. I was a child then. Oh, would to Heaven I were a child still. How it all came back to me that night — my childhood; the gay old times when we trimmed the rooms in holly and spruce, and believed in Santa Claus. How we used to lie in bed and wait with bated breath, for the jingling of his sleigh-bells, and the chirping of his merry voice, which, somehow, we never stayed awake long enough to hear. Oh, dear me! Why can't we always believe in Santa Claus? It's terrible to know for a certainty that father and mother put those presents in your stockings, and that there never was such a jolly, genial, little saint as he. Don't tell the children at all events. Let the darlings have faith in him as long as their tender feet chase childish pleasures.

How time passed then! My long curls were sacrificed to my boyish pride, and I recollect mother cried when she cut them off. Then my pinafore gave place to pants. What a man I was then! How I condescended to Baby that day. I have never felt the same pride and glory of manhood so earnestly as I did then when I rammed my little fists in my first pockets, and strutted about for the admiration of my brothers and sisters. How delightedly I lifted up the latch that little Clara could not reach! Alas for me! she has grown so fast — the little Clara — that I cannot reach the latch of the door which has shut her from me; and though the locks are daisies and the chains myrtle, my weak hand is powerless to break them. What a gloomy Christmas it was after she left us! The glory of my boyish dress was old and a matter-of-course; my beautiful faith in Santa Claus had burst like a brilliant bubble,

and for me the glamour and fascination of Christmas Eve was gone forever. The little chair next mine was vacant, and the little cup on the dresser was unused, and saddest of all, one tiny pair of stockings was missing from the broad old chimney-front. Little Clara would never know that Santa Claus was but a myth, and that her father filled her stockings.

And so the years went by. The baby grew in his turn to disdain curls, and to glory in pants. Harry, and Charlie, and Kate went to school, and Maria, who had been a rigid disciplinarian from her cradle, renounced the world which she had never cared for, and became in name, what she was in nature, a stern, silent nun.

Then my mother, who had fought the good fight, armed with the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation, went over the river. "She could go no farther, so the angels took her home." Before another Christmas our father followed her. So the dear home next was broken up, and the young birds, one by one, abandoned it. Harry married and went to Europe, Kate went to the far west with a husband of her own choosing; and Charlie, our fair, bright, talented Charlie, genial and witty, and gay — forgot too often his angel mother and yielded to temptation. I sent him to Europe with Harry, and the baby Clarence I sent to college. So there was not a child at the old home. Many Christmases had passed since then, and yet alone in my room they came back to me. We had a little visitor in our home then — Gertrude Lee — and we were all together. I had lost my faith in Santa Claus and was already fighting under Cupid's arrows. How happy I was to see Gertrude's delighted gratitude to Santa Claus for the little ship which she had found in her stocking, but which had been my labor for many days. How I loved the little coquette, who was sure to shower her favors on Charlie! How —

"Ernie, my darling boy, have patience!"

The clear, sweet tones came through the partition, breaking in like a sound of remembered music upon my dreams. I started suddenly. There was a familiar cadence in the voice which murmured such familiar words that involuntarily I listened.

"But, mamma," sighed a childish voice, with a sad intona-

tion which pained me, "it is so long to wait. Will Santa Claus never come and bring me an orange. My lips are so hot."

"Darling, it is late to-night, and mamma cannot get you an orange. Can't you go to sleep?"

"O!" and this time the voice was aquiver with tears, "Mamma, I am so hot; I want one."

Soft and low came the answer:

"Ernie, say your prayers, and let mamma cover you up. Then she will go and buy you one."

These neighbors of mine had just come, and I was seized with a sudden desire to see them.

Standing aside that it is ungentlemanly to peep, I must confess that I did peep through the keyhole. The lady was dressed in mourning, and I could see in that dark waving hair and graceful form that she had grace at least. Her face was from me, the child was kneeling at her knee. A poor, pale face he had, shaded by curls; and I saw upon it a look which I had seen on no face since I had bid Gertie good-by, years before. This baby face was so like hers. The very voice had the same intonation.

"God bless mamma and — and — Santa Claus," prayed the child.

I stole back softly to my room. The cold, sleety rain rattled against my windows, but I never thought of that. I donned my greatcoat and boots and went out bravely, sending an orange up to the child at once by a servant. An hour after that, I returned, laden down with toys of all kinds — everything that I thought he might like. Then I drew my muffler over my face and tapped at my neighbor's door. The child was asleep in his little bed, and the room was quite dark. As the lady stood in the doorway, I tendered the packages, saying:

"Santa Claus has brought Ernie his toys."

"But, sir," — the lady hesitated.

"Madam, do not have less faith than the child. Santa Claus has come."

With that, and before she could refuse, I put the packages in her hand and left the hall, passing out the front door to elude suspicion, and only venturing back when I was sure the lady was asleep.

Christmas morning, I was wakened from sleep by the simultaneous burst of sunshine and the laugh of a child — such a dear, ringing, childish laugh — such a perfect triumph of gladness, that I lifted my head from my pillow to catch its every note.

“Mamma, mamma,” shouted the child, “God has sent Santa Claus. Oh, may I pray, mamma?”

There was a silence, and I knew the child was kneeling. Then I heard his voice again, sweetly lifted up:

“O God, bless mamma and Ernie, and God bless Santa Claus.”

How my lonesome old heart warmed at that childish blessing, and answered:

“God in Heaven, bless the child!”

I rose and dressed, feeling my utter loneliness more than I can tell you. The breakfast-bell rang. I opened my door, only to run into the arms of my fair neighbor. I ran backward at that, thereby upsetting the “darling boy,” who was insisting upon taking his drum and horn to the breakfast table. I begged pardon and took up Ernie. The lady turned to me. I knew it in a moment — that clear, sweet profile; those large, dark eyes — and there was a simultaneous cry of “Gertie,” “Ernest,” as our hands met.

“Mamma,” said the child, making his pretty eyes big with wonder, “is he Ernest? Is that me growed up?”

Gertie laughed and blushed. I threw the boy, drum and horn to my shoulder, and led the way to the breakfast room.

Two months passed, and my bachelor-heart had learned to pit-a-pat at the very rustle of Gertrude’s dress. She was still at the hotel, but beyond that I knew nothing of her history since we met. From her dark mourning I knew that she was a widow. I knew that Ernie’s name was Ernest Bell — named for me she said — but beyond that I was in ignorance. We were “Gertie,” and “Ernest” to each other, and excepting her reserve as to her own history, frank and free as we were in the olden times. So I grew to love her; and the time came when I decided I would risk all at one throw. It was a beautiful, clear evening in March when I asked Gertie if she would walk with me. She hesitated a moment, and then consented. Ernie was

put to bed and we started. Gertie looked very pretty that night. I remember even the little curl which lay on her forehead. I, who loved her so — who took her that night to tell her that I loved her — led her to speak of herself, and for the first time she told me her story. She told it to me stonily and calmly, as though her lips but obeyed her will, though her heart broke; and this was the story.

She was no widow, only a deserted wife. Herself and child were left alone in the world. She worked for a living and made it. She was — my brother Charlie's wife.

Then we turned and went home; and, Gertrude lingering at the door a moment, said:

"Brother Ernie, you will not desert us, will you?"

I stooped and kissed her, and then, speaking no word, went to my room.

There was between us no bar of birth or wealth, but worse, and forever — my brother Charlie. And so the words which I hoped would win me a wife were never spoken, and I am still Ernest Bell, bachelor; but under my protecting wing I have my sister Gertrude and my namesake Ernie, who, by the way astonished me very much the other day by remarking:

"Uncle Jack, ain't it time you was ditting married? I'm in love a'ready!"

The little rogue! The idea of Ernie being in love! *Soit!*

For the *New York Mercury*. October 20, 1886.

UNDER THE HILLS

"What are you writing, Cousin Ernie?" asked little Lelia, eclipsing my paper with her golden head.

"Out of the way," I commanded, savagely. "I'm philosophizing."

Whereupon I kiss her pouting lips, and do not box her ears, although she has wiped out my best sentences with her curls. Then, Lelia, womanlike, though repulsed, upon seeing the faintest signs of weakness in the enemy's fortifications, re-

doubles the attack, smiled winningly in my face, and recommenced:

"You know, Cousin Ernie, you don't want to write philosophy?"

"Not? Why not, pray?"

"Oh, 'cause it ain't cunning."

Lelia has a great idea of things being cunning.

"Of course," I reply, "if my philosophy isn't cunning, I don't want to write it, so what shall I write?"

"Oh, I know!" cried the child, clapping her hands, "write a love story."

"A love story, Puss! Where will I get the lady?"

Lelia stands at the window looking dreamily over the autumn-tinted hills, down the little path which winds along their side, then turns to me and says:

"Cousin Ernie, don't you remember last summer when we all went down there," pointing to the little footpath which lies like a silver thread in green velvet; "write about that."

I sadden suddenly. The child's smile cast a shadow over me; I wish she would leave me. And, as if divining my wish, she suddenly darts through the low window, and down to the lawn, in chase of a gay-coated butterfly. I can hear her ringing laugh as the wind brings it back, but it does not make me smile. I am thinking about another chase after a butterfly, and of another autumn-afternoon, more fair than this; and, half unconsciously I turn to my paper, and write as Lelia bade me.

My Uncle George had visitors then, as he generally did during the summer months; and what with riding, boating, and dancing, I had no time for philosophizing, nor had I the desire, since among my uncle's guests Fannie Clarke was numbered. This summer was the first time I had ever seen her, and she came upon me with all her attractions enhanced by novelty. I was young, romantic and affectionate; consequently I had not been two weeks under the same roof with Fannie Clarke before I loved her dearly.

Are these sudden loves less lasting than those of slower growth? I have sometimes thought so, but I surely know not. As the sweet summer ripened and deepened into autumn, it

brought me the one great joy of a man's life; I was Fannie Clarke's affianced husband, and she had told me over and over again that she loved me. Among the guests there was one, a young man that I never liked. He was graceful and agreeable enough, and a great "catch," I believe; but the shy glitter of his sharp eye, and the cat-like fall of his footstep, and a general air of cunning warned me that he was unworthy of trust. To this man Fannie showed much attention, preferring him for her walks and rides when I could not be in attendance, and at all times treating him with a deferential courtesy for which I could not account.

True love is never suspicious. I was not jealous of George Sharp. I never imagined for one moment that Fannie's attentions were other than those called out by his own merits as a companion, but I did not like my darling's pure mind to be influenced for one moment by that of a man my instinct condemned. I spoke to her of it. She laughed, kissed me lightly on the forehead, told me in a pretty caressing way that I was a dear, foolish fellow, and ran away to walk with George Sharp. I laughed at my own fears, and at Fannie's playful disregard of them; so when she returned and slyly slipped her hand in mine, I could do nothing else but kiss the pouting lips, and call her my naughty darling.

It was in August, the last of the month, when some of the girls came in and proposed a picnic in the woods. There were eight couples of us, counting my little niece, Lelia, and her ten-year old beau, Charlie, and among all not one dissenting voice. The day was delightful. Above us bent the soft, blue sky, flecked with fleecy clouds; beneath our feet rolled the emerald green, dotted here and there with summer flowers. We sent hampers before us, luxuriously filled, and we followed at our leisure. We had a mile-long walk through a green, winding lane. Oh, now at this time, how well I remember it! That was the happiest hour of my life. Fannie walked by me, a little subdued from her usual high spirits, but so sweetly womanly, so prettily gracious, that I could scarcely refrain from folding her in my arms and kissing her then and there. Once I said to her softly:

"Fannie, Fannie! It would kill me to lose you."

Her reply I understood better afterward.

"Ernie, don't think too much of me now, and by-and-by don't be too severe a judge."

We entered the shadow of the wood then, and Fannie left my side to assist aunt in opening the hampers. Fannie was so helpful and thoughtful. I watched her pink dress fluttering in and out the trees for some time, then threw myself upon a luxurious mossy bank, and fell to dreaming over "Camille." The somnolence of air and sky, the drowsy whirl of insects, and the soft warmth of the sunshine as it trickled through the leaves, overpowered me; Fannie's pink dress, my dreams, and Camille, one after another slipped away, and I slept.

"Get up, Ernie, Fannie and Lucy and the rest have gone into the coal mine, and lunch is ready. Go you and bring them straight here."

My aunt's voice and hearty shake lured me immediately from the palace of Morpheus. I sprang up suddenly, having an indistinct idea that I was to go somewhere and do something, but the where and the what were mysterious. She repeated her commands again, and I prepared to obey.

The hill on which I stood sloped rapidly into a narrow defile, through which rippled the yellow-tinted coal-stream. On the opposite side were the mines. As I went down, I saw the black, rugged miners scattered under the trees, taking their lunch, while their canine colaborers stood patiently in the harness and watched wistfully for spare bones and crumbs.

"Which way did the ladies enter?" I asked the man lying nearest me.

"That'n to yer right," he replied. "Two of the b'yes hauled 'em in."

I entered the narrow aperture, and groped my way cautiously along the rails, stooping as the low roof obliged me. I called to the party, and their voices replied in the distance, reaching my ear with a hollow, muffled sound that was ghostly. Soon I could hear the rumble of the car-wheels, and then I saw the faint flicker of the lights which the miner-boys wear in their caps. Nearer and nearer they came, until they paused just in front of me. I missed Fannie's voice.

"Are you all there?" I asked.

The answer was, "All but Fannie and George. They preferred to walk, and explore the rooms."

"Go on," I commanded; "lunch is ready on the hill. I will find Fannie and Sharp, and follow you."

Unable to pass the car on the narrow track, I sprang into it, and then out again on the opposite side, at which feat the ladies scolded because of crushed dresses and the gentlemen applauded because the ladies scolded. Then the car moved on, and left me to pursue my solitary search. I had taken a lamp from a miner's cap, but a sudden gust of air extinguished it; so in silent darkness I groped my way, listening for voices. I drew my coat closer about me, and wondered if Fannie would not take cold. Just then the sound of her voice came to me from a small room near at hand. My name was on her lips. I stopped and listened.

"Ernest? Oh, he's a dear fellow, and I know loves me dearly; but for you to be jealous of him! Shame on you, George!"

The reply was quick and passionate, not at all in George Sharp's usual calm tones.

"But I tell you, Fannie, I hate him. I shall murder that man some day, if you don't keep away from him."

Fannie laughed, that sweet, silvery laugh, which had so often made music in my loving heart, which now smote it with such fierce pain.

"George, dear, don't be jealous. Fannie must have her fun. Soon she'll be all your own, you know."

"All his own!" I reeled, and struck sharply against the wall. At the sound Sharp cried out:

"Who's there?"

I mastered myself fiercely. He should never know my pain; and replied:

"I — Ernest Bell. Lunch is ready. Come, hurry up, Sharp. Tuck Fannie under your arm, and I'll lead the way."

So under the hill we traveled — Sharp, Fannie, and I. We laughed and chatted gayly as we groped along, but one heart had lost forever its youth, and idol, and love; one heart had closed the doors of its inner sanctum upon a shattered idol, a broken vow, and a lost love. "Fanny must have her fun."

Over and again, the stinging words smote my shuddering heart, and burnt themselves there forever. I wonder, in another world, whether I can forget the sweet, childish innocence of the voice which said such cruel words, and cease to remember how they smote my heart.

As we journeyed, the little light, which had seemed but a tiny star, enlarged and brightened, until suddenly I brought my followers into the full light of day. The miners were rousing their sleepy dogs, and preparing for afternoon toil. The tender blue sky dropped its silent balm upon my pained heart; and sweetest Mother Nature, in lieu of the mother who had slept in her bosom many years, comforted me.

As we neared the gay group on the hill, little Lelia came running to me; and, when I lifted her in my arms, burst into tears. Ah, Lelia "had lost her necklace under the hills — her pretty, pretty necklace that she loved so." I kissed the child, and promised her another more beautiful, at which she smiled, and clapped her hands, the tears yet lying on her lashes. Verily, Lelia had not much to grieve for, when she could so soon forget. As for me, I was very miserable. I had loved, and did then love Fannie, very, very much. She was a part of myself, my dream, my hope, my joy and crown, and I had found her a flirt — a heartless, flippant creature, "who must have her fun." I treated her during the remainder of the day with a coolness which seemed to surprise her; and, judging from the bent brow, even pain her somewhat; and when we went home, there was a shadow on every face, born, perhaps, with the one so quickly darkened.

This, then was the story that Lelia, in her childish ignorance would have me write out. I wrote it dreaming the tender dream over again, even tho' it brought back the old pain. I had never seen Fannie since, having left home before dawn the next morning. I had not even heard of her marriage (which I suppose took place), nor, since my return, had uncle or aunt mentioned her name.

"Cousin Ernie; Cousin Ernie," (Lelia would never call me uncle) "there's a carriage coming up the drive."

I took my hat and followed Lelia's impatient feet out to

the piazza. Aunt Jane was there before me; and she was welcoming a lady in deep mourning, folding her in her motherly arms with even more than Aunt Jane's usual tenderness. And the lady — as she lifted her deep crape veil, I recognized Fannie of one year ago, but a softer, sweeter, more womanly spirit smiled from her eyes. I knew from intuition that Fannie had been tried in the fire. No need of the mourning-garments to tell me that she had mourned; and that she was comforted, the holy calm upon her brow proclaimed.

Acting from impulse, I walked away and sought my own room. I could not then speak to Fannie; I must first learn control. Sitting alone that quiet afternoon, I searched my own heart and still found it filled with one image, one name,— Fannie.

The tea-bell rang unheeded, and the twilight was veiling the earth when Aunt Jane entered my room. She laid her hand softly on my head.

"Ernie," she said, "I have something to say to you — about Fannie. I noticed that you did not welcome her. Dear boy, I used to fancy that you cared for her, but somehow things went wrong. Poor Fannie! let me tell you her story. I am afraid she was a sad flirt. At all events, she was blamed a great deal; but Fannie never thought. That was her greatest fault. About ten months ago she married George Sharp. He converted her personal property into money; and two weeks after marriage left for Europe. He died on the way of heart disease, and Fannie was a widow. Then her parents were taken sick, and after long illness, both died. Ernest, fatherless, motherless, and a widow, Fannie has come home. If she ever grieved you, can't you forgive her?"

Forgive her? My whole heart leaped and throbbed to know that she might yet be worthy. Aunt went on:

"She never loved her husband, but to please her father and mother she married him. She was the tenderest and most faithful of daughters while she nursed him and her mother. Ernie dear, Fannie has been purified by suffering."

Then Aunt Jane left me, and after a while I strolled out to the piazza. The silent stars were setting their watch-lights in the Heavens, and Mars already showed his ruddy

gleam above the horizon. The trellised roses trembled in the evening air, and shook rare odors from their overflowing vines. In their shadow I saw Fannie standing. She was not thinking of roses, but her quiet face was lifted to the sky, with an expression of such perfect peace and holiness upon it, that I murmured involuntarily:

“One would unconsciously paint her
With a halo round her hair.”

I stood for a moment observing her, then advanced.

“Fannie.”

“Ernest.”

There was no need of words. We understood, she and I, all that time had wrought and strengthened; and as, hand in hand, we watched the stars come out, both felt that in the darkness of our lives, some stars had dawned.

As the weeks passed by, we knew each other better, Fannie and I, and I opened again the inner sanctum of my heart and set up my idol again. I mended the vows which were broken and found my love which was lost.

So I forgot the darkness which had fallen upon me under the hills, and came out into the clear sunlight of happiness.

For the *New York Mercury*. December 15, 1866.

OVER THE RIVER

My window overlooked the Potomac — that bright, curving branch which runs like a silver cord through green velvet. And a little rustic bridge spans it, over which the gaudy Virginia creeper runs riot; from either bank its clinging tendrils reach the bridge, and mantle it, until the floating greenness lies upon the water beneath. In the distance the pine-clad mountains loom gradually up, and the blue sky bends to meet it.

From the river, a smooth, green lawn rises gradually until a pretty Gothic building breaks its monotony. On either side of the house are trees and flowers. This is my view. Since

my lameness, I have learned to sit patiently at the window, and be happy.

Shut out by my terrible calamity from the active pursuits and pleasures of men, I can now look at my helpless feet, once so willing and able, without a shudder. I could not do so at the time I write. The swift young blood was coursing through my veins; the strong young heart beat impatiently about its cage. I could not humbly bow to the will of God. So young and so full of fresh youth; ready to launch into a manhood which promised so well, what wonder if heart and soul grew sick at the thought of being debarred forever from this — a lame, miserable man until death should release me.

The glory of the setting sun has faded from river and clouds. The solemn mountains melt into the dusky sky. Silently the evening-star rises into sight, and the silver crescent hangs above her. I turn from the scene. In coming night an inexpressible sadness overpowers me. I will tell my story, for it is like this evening — quiet and sad, lighted by the tender radiance of the evening star.

When I was twenty-two, I had already entered into mercantile life, with every prospect of success. My father, dying, left me a moderate fortune. This was my setting out in life. Early orphaned, I yet never knew my loss until my grandmother also died, leaving me her blessing, and an education which could not fail me in my journey through life. So, at twenty-two, young, strong, active, my heart thrilling with high hopes. I was very happy.

One evening, it was August, I think, I was returning from the store when I heard the cry "Fire." An eager crowd forced me with them, and I soon stood before the burning building. It was a handsome residence, but of wooden structure, and stood already wrapped in flames. The firemen were risking life and limb in their efforts to save property; but now, one by one, they slid down the ladders and left the house to its certain fate.

"Can't do no more," said one, "the rafters is caught a'ready."

Suddenly I saw a sight which froze my blood. It was the apparition of a young girl at the turret-window, her hair flying from her pale face, her slender arms outstretched pleadingly

for help. I shall never forget that scene — never! never! Framed in by the hungry flames and the black shrouding smoke, calmly she stood, waiting for aid.

“Too late!” shouted the firemen. “Too late!”

“Too late! never!” I cried. “A ladder, for God’s sake, a ladder!”

Some one placed one against the wall. I sprang up, calling out for the girl to stand still. Up, up! until the hot flames licked my face and scorched my hands. One moment more, and the girl’s feet were on the ladder; step by step she descended.

“Quick, quick!” shouted the multitude below me. “The wall is falling!”

I turned to follow — then there was a confused sound of voices cheering and crying — of crushing timbers; and above all, I could hear the crackling of the flames. Then I knew no more. All of life merged into a sense of falling. When I awoke, I was in a darkened room. I tried to move, but the sharp pain brought back memory. My scarred hands told their story. I knew, then, all there was to know, that I was lamed; that never again could I be as I had been — never again! I buried my face in the pillow and sobbed aloud. All the pent-up agony of my heart found vent then. I wept for my lost youth, and marred hands. I prayed for patience; and in praying, groaned that I had need for it. My nurse came in — through all my agony I had been grateful for solitude — the kind old lady, who had been my grandmother’s housekeeper, and talked to me tenderly and wisely. She soothed me but I was not resigned. It took many bitter lessons to teach me resignation. As I grew better, I began to long for change of scene. My sensitive mind shrank from old acquaintances. I did not like to hobble on crutches through the street, my pale gaunt face asking for pity. There were many kind inquiries for me at the door; many baskets of fruit and bouquets left for me; but I refused, with a morbid sensitiveness, from seeing any one. And as soon as I could be removed, Jane, my faithful nurse and I left the city, and rented this little rose-nest of a cottage, where, at least, I could bear my burden in solitude. And now my chief employment was to sit at my window.

Already the opening spring was arousing the birds to gayety;

and day by day the tender leaves opened their coy hearts to the sunshine. The Gothic house opposite became interesting to me. At first, my sensitive dread of strangers made me carefully avoid even so much as glancing that way; but after which, I made friends with them as I did with the trees and stars. I used to watch them in and about their dwelling, and conjecture as to whom they were, and whether they were happy.

There was an old man, who used to sit in the afternoon-sunshine, with thin white hair, and a bowed form, and a little child — his grandchild, I knew — with floating curls, and light feet. Then there was a lady, scarce middle-aged, who was the mother of the child, and a widow, I imagined, from her mourning.

There was another inmate of the house, one that I grew to watch for, more than all the rest. A young girl with fair hair, and a holy face — a face that I had seen before, I could not remember when or where, but I knew that I had seen her. And she grew into my heart. Her pretty, motherly ways toward the willful little pet, her gentle kindness to the lady, and above all, her thoughtful tenderness to the old father, won my constant love.

I used to sit and listen as she read to him, sitting at his feet. I could hear no word, but still the reading did me good. "Over the river" grew to be my solace and comfort. It was such a warm, bright ribbon of a river, that I never felt utterly divided from them. After a while they grew to noticing me, and the little child sometimes blew me kisses from her dimpled hand, and ran off laughing. I could hear the silver ripples of her childish voice, faintly, as she flew.

After a time, the old man, when he took his arm-chair on the piazza, would bow to me, and the young lady would look over at my window. The day never was so dark that her smile could not light it up for me. I grew to watch for her coming, and she seldom failed to reward me during the morning.

As the summer advanced, I missed the child. She was never among the flowers. The butterflies no longer eluded her tiny hands. Her light feet bounded over the lawn no more; and when once I caught the gleam of her curls against the window, I saw that some one held her. The old grandfather sat less

often in his easy-chair, and the mother I could see flitting about the room where I had seen the child. The young lady never read to her father now, and she never smiled when she glanced at my window. I grew restless, troubled and uneasy. Sadly and slowly a week passed, and the old peaceful life across the river was not resumed. The lawn and gravelled walks remained unrolled, the gate was open, and the flowers bloomed untended.

One bright afternoon, I saw the child's curls shining at the window. She was lying in some one's arms. Then I saw her sweet face turned toward my window; and she blew me a kiss from her tiny hand, faintly, I thought, and wearily. I returned the salute with an aching heart. I knew that my little star was ill.

That afternoon, intense suffering kept me prisoner to my chair; but the next morning, for the first time in months, I took my crutches and left the cottage. Slowly and painfully I took my way across the rustic bridge, and up the winding road. I had no thought of my lameness and pallid face then. It was as I thought. From the door floated the insignia of woe. The child was dead. I had watched them so long and tenderly. They had been so long the only link between me and my fellow-men, that in this child's death a star had fallen from my sky. My weakened nerves fluttered, strained, proved false to my manhood. I sank to a garden-chair and wept.

I do not know how long I sat there, my face buried in my hands, before I felt a light hand on my shoulder, and looking up, I met the calm sad face of the young girl.

"Do not weep," she said, though tears were in her own eyes. "She is happy."

I did not speak. My heart was too full.

"She used to watch you with interest," she added, softly; "and just before she died, would be taken to the window to see you and throw you a kiss."

"I missed her," I replied, "and could not stay away — the dear, dear little child."

After that, we spoke of her tenderly, as old friends might do, since we both had loved her; and she told me all her store of memories; all the child had said of "the lame gentleman

opposite," and how she had wished that he might walk again.

Then we went in to see her little form. She was lying in her little crib at the open window. The pure scent of the June-roses came softly in; and the light breeze missing its playmate, and finding her here, stirred the curls slightly upon her pillow. She seemed sleeping, but the look upon her face was not the smile of sleep. The "peace which passeth understanding" had settled there, and on the childish brow we saw the seal of God.

I could not kiss the child. My weak mortality shrank from her immortality. There was between us a great gulf fixed. I knew that a stream broader and deeper than our little river flowed between us, and that never could I see the golden shining of her curls on that farther shore, never catch the faintest echo of her laughing, nor return the playful salute.

I did not notice the old man sitting in the shadow, with his face in his hands, until the young girl said:

"Father, the lame gentleman opposite has come to see our baby."

Then he lifted his head a little, but it sank again.

"Ah," he said, "she grew fond of you; only yesterday, she threw you a kiss, sir. The child is an angel now."

Then the old man fell to mourning, rocking his feeble form to and fro. The young girl softly kissed his forehead, and led the way from the room.

As we passed the drawing-room door, I saw the mother of the child. She was weaving flowers into a wreath for the little one's coffin, and her tears fell on every petal.

"You will come to-morrow," the young girl said, brokenly.

"I will come," I replied, and pressing her hand, I turned away.

The next day, I was again prisoner in my room, but I sat at my window all day. How tenderly it waned! Softly the sun sank into a sea of mellow autumn-tints, and the cool evening breeze came up from the dimpled river, when the sad, black-plumed hearse led the train from the house. Slowly and sadly the procession wound along the silver-sanded road, and so out of sight. I could see it all — the milk-white rosebuds in a crown upon the coffin, the cross of white lilies at its foot, heavier

than any cross that little child had ever borne; the sad, tender face of the young girl; the feeble old man, leaning on the weeping mother's arm, and the few friends that were there.

As they passed, the young girl looked at my window. I know not if she smiled, or if it were my fancy, but my heavy heart grew lighter, and a great peace came upon my soul.

I bowed my head upon the window-sill; and the sad, sad train moved on under the shadowy trees, around the hill, and so from my view.

After that, for many weeks I never lifted my head from my pillow. The low fever burnt itself out. I saw none of the solemn changes of the summer leaves. Before my weakened head could lift itself, September had come with all her glories in her train.

During my illness I had been conscious of almost daily visits from a fair face that I knew; but whether it were real or but a vision, I dared not ask. Flowers and dainty fruits came to my room from "over the river," Jane said, and I knew that they did not forget me.

One afternoon, Jane consented to wheel my bed near the window. How glorious it was! The mountains, no longer green, but amber, and crimson, and gold, vied vainly with the western sky. The Virginia-creeper on the bridge trailed crimson leaves along the water. Here and there stripped branches laid their delicate tracery against the sky. The darling river bore many leaves upon its bosom, and the tender grass was getting brown. Over the river the gaudy chrysanthemums were in flower, the dahlias, and a few monthly roses, but the warm summer sunshine was over all, and brightening all.

While I sat silently at my window, though I was conscious of no door opening, I knew that I was not alone. There was a quick, light step, and the fair girl from over the river was at my bedside.

"You are better?" she asked, simply.

"Much," I replied; "almost well. Will you sit down?"

Unheeding my question, she laid her soft dear hand on mine. How her touch thrilled me! Mine closed softly upon it.

"I have something to say to you," she said, at last breaking

the silence that had fallen upon us. "Since you have been sick I have been here often, and I have learned — Oh me, Gary — that — that —" her voice trembled, she controlled it, and added steadily — "that I am to blame for all this suffering!"

Slowly sinking to her knees, and hiding her fair face in her hands, she said:

"My name is Alice Hamilton."

"Ah, I knew that name. This, then, was the one whose life I had saved; this the being for whom I have suffered!"

Like the rush of a strong river, the flood of happiness rolled over my soul. Again I saw the fair face framed in its terrible framing, and now I knew that I had saved her. I forgot my seared face, my lameness, my suffering. I only remembered that I had saved her life, and that she was kneeling before me.

"O God I thank thee!" came from my lips, and Alice, looking up, said:

"Then you do not hate me?"

"Hate you? Shall I tell you, that having saved you I am happy; that for the first time since it happened, I am resigned."

"Oh, what shall I do to repay you, my savior?" Alice sobbed aloud. Her tender heart ached to see my woe.

I laid my hand on her bowed head. What I said I know not, but I knew that it was madness; yet the words came, and I spoke them.

And Alice? She rose silently from her knees with a rapt face, such a holy light upon her face, and bending over me, pressed her lips to mine.

"My love — my dearest —"

Then between us two there came a happy pause. She knelt again beside me, and there was no word said. I knew that to her the scarred face was not hateful; to her the lame feet very dear. I trusted in her love. I knew that she was happy by the great, solemn joy that broke upon my own soul.

When she left me that afternoon, the sun was setting. I watched her light form flitting across the bridge. At the farther end she turned, smiled upon me, and then was gone. How like a dream it all was — a happy, happy dream! My grateful heart uplifted to its Father — sanctified because of joy.

Another morning. Over the river, the dear old gentleman

sits in sunshine, and his daughter reads to him. At my window I sit and watch them; but there is a dear face close to mine, clinging arms are about my neck, and a voice — the voice of all the world to me — says:

“ Paul, my darling. Can’t we go over and see father and Mary to-day? ”

I think so. I can walk far better now. My health is rugged now; and if I am to walk lamely all my life, I have a tender darling, strong in her weakness, who loves me — an angel who has flown, to heal my aching heart, from over the river.

For the *New York Mercury*. December 22, 1866.

THE GRACEFUL PEN OF ERNEST BELL THUS SKETCHES OUR STREET

We have a little short street, girt about by larger ones, set like a garden-plot among the closer city-dwellings. Looking down we can see the street cars whirl along, and from the highest houses we can see the white sails of our stately ships; but here come none of the hurry and bustle of trade; here can come no ceaseless turmoil of machinery; even the whistle of the locomotive, softened by distance, reaches us pleasantly.

In the summertime, the birds flutter among the trees that line the street. All winter, the red berries of the mountain-ash blush beneath the snow, and the constant evergreens stand up proudly in their summer robes.

Each house has its plot of grass, its clinging vines, and bed of flowers in front; some of them have odorous fruit-trees, which laden the summer-air with sweets, and set the greedy honey-bees almost insane because of too much sweetness.

We are not in want of the comforts of life for a beautiful church holds the cross aloft not two squares distant; and a stone’s throw from us, though not on the street, are congregated a grocery, a bakery, a saddlery, a meat-shop, and a thread-and-needle store. So we live a life by ourselves. The great city is a myth.

In our little world we grieve and are happy; we scold, and

kiss, and gossip; and we all love our neighbors, if not as ourselves, at least as they deserve. There are very few little folks in the street, consequently every baby is a prodigy. We treasure their sweet and pretty sayings with all the pride of possessing an ownership in them.

"My dear," said Mrs. —, to her little three-year-old, "Mamma doesn't like to see you fill your mouth so full."

"Well," replied Miss Kitty, coolly, "I'm sure you needn't look at me then."

That's a specimen of our babies.

But the houses are changing hands. Even Miss Kitty left last week for New York. Scarcely a year ago, from the door below us floated the insignia of woe, "Some one is dead!"

Ah! but that did not tell the story of a desolated home; that did not tell how, urged by a morbid melancholy, the poor mother stepped boldly into the river of death and looked not back; how we spoke to her young daughters tenderly, and pitied them in love.

Three weeks later, there was a wedding next door. Was there ever a sweeter bride or handsomer groom? How rich in happiness the future seemed for them! Fortune had poured its treasure at their feet.

Alas! In six weeks time, ere the bridal wreaths had withered, the bride was again clad in her bridal robes; but this time, as we looked upon her face, we wept.

Six brief weeks. Only that, and yet the house was desolate, and but a bright curl or two remained of the darling.

After these sad afflictions, our neighbors left their home, choosing other scenes, and strangers took their places.

To-day, chill, comfortless, dreary, with a leaden sky above, and the ceaseless patter of November rain upon the fallen leaves, which have lost their glory of amber and gold; to-day when the sweet sun should shine its benison, there is to be another wedding.

God grant that her bridal-wreath serve not to crown the coffin. They two go from us upon an untried road — young and strong, full of hope they go — and reverently we bid them God speed.

Last week came to our street two little strangers — so little

and so helpless that we almost feared to touch them. I think there never was a brighter morning than that in which they came. It was as though, to teach them by degrees the difference between heaven and earth, God left them for a little while the brightness of heaven. They were so sweet that their Maker duplicated them. We could not tell them apart; but before evening of the first day, He had chosen one of them, and its innocent young life was closed. Not for it were the shoals and quicksands of the world; not for it sorrow, and temptation, and death, for it had lived so brief a life that it could be hardly said to die.

I have seen a child with its pet lamb in the field. It was held by a cord. When it strayed too near the dangerous river, the child would quietly draw him back to safety. So this angel-soul, used to the celestial asphodels, must not stray beyond its confines. Its tender Shepherd, holding yet the chain, has drawn it gently back.

Who can comprehend this awful mystery of death? Here is a little child, whose eyes have just opened upon the world — born to suffer a few hours; to moan his little life away — here his brother, seemingly as helpless and as innocent, remains — for what? God alone knows.

His feet may learn to climb, or fail him at the lowest step. Ah! they may go astray and wander blindly from the right; his little hands may grasp at the glory of a crown, or stain their purity with sin! And the little soul which went to Paradise to-day, may smile to see the ripening and purifying of its brother-soul — through grief.

As I think of them, my eyes fill with tears, and I tremble more for the little child who breathes than for his brother, so early laid away under the leaves.

No need to praise the tender beauties of that bitter essay, for every reader will appreciate them at once.

January 12, 1867.

MY TROUBADOUR

To write a romance may be pleasant; to live one must be painful. In novels there is a witchery about them; in real life, there is but misery. A romance is like a cloud: as it sails above us, in the far distance, how beautiful! how delicate! how enchanting! What gorgeous coloring! what endless variety! what perfection! But as we stand upon the mountain and view these bright poetic clouds beneath our feet, how are they altered! They roll suddenly along, dull-leadened gray, vapory, with not a vestige of their former beauty. Gone the color, the delicacy, the enchantment; and but the damp vaporous mass is left to warn you of a coming storm. So now, I, who have read romances and lived them, write, so now I think. I had not perhaps, a life more eventful than others, but about every one there is a romance. Mine was not an exception. My beautiful visions were but dreams; my castles in the air but fancies; my idols, were but clay; and my luscious fruits have turned to ashes on my lips. That is the penalty of Eve's transgression; that is the miracle of the curse unrevoked, in so far that we must suffer. Of this I do not intend to write.

These happy Christmas times, when the snow is robing the earth in holiday attire, and the spruce and the holly are ready to be plucked; when the children's eyes are brighter, and parents' hearts are younger! I will recall no sad tale, but will give you my first romance as I lived it — my beautiful cloud with the silver lining, which melted away in a shower of tears and a burst of laughter.

To commence then. Once upon a time, as the children say, I was born. For this I have the veracity of my parents, as I don't remember it. My parent was not inclined to oleaginous productions, but made a fortune in some less slippery manner. He had a well-furnished house, a good table, plenty of servants, and a handsome team. I was his oldest daughter. My sister was what sisters generally are, a troublesome comfort, or a comfortable trouble, as it happened.

Upon this occasion she was neither, being away at school. My mother was dead — and I, pretty, young, romantic, and

seventeen, was my father's housekeeper. I had grown out of short dresses and the nursery, into long ones and the drawing-room before I knew that Robinson Crusoe was a myth, and that "The Sorrows of Werther" were not reliable. How I wept over "The Romance of the Forest," and delighted in "Thaddeus of Warsaw." I had not been allowed many novels, consequently the few impressed my mind deeply. My little maid, Barbara, was accustomed to get these for me and peruse them herself. This same maid was a character in her way — pretty, bright, and romantic. I used her for a friend in my loneliness. She was not, I am afraid, taught to know her place. In fact, Barbara hadn't any particular province; but if I linger on Barbara, I shall never — never reach "my troubadour."

"Miss Nettie, it's him," cried Barbara, excitedly, pushing her rosy face into my door one night as I was brushing my hair.

"Him! Who's him?" asked I, looking up.

"Oh, don't you know, Miss Nettie? It's the young man that's been a watchin' about yer for ever so long!"

"A young man, Barbara; you must be crazy. What do you mean?"

"Why, Miss Nettie, aren't you seen 'im? 'E's been habout hever so long; and maybe 'e'll come with a black 'orse and a great cloak with a long black tail, an' all covered with foam, and carry you hoff like the bewitched bridegroom hin the story! Oh, Miss Nettie! 'E's a tuning hup'."

Tuning up, he surely was, for now I heard the thrumming of a guitar. I turned down the light, raised the window, though it was a chilly night, and prepared to listen to what promised to be my first serenade.

I could not see the form below my window, but in a moment a strong, manly voice arose, accompanied by the guitar, and my little maid and I could distinguish this song, as it is written:

"Lady of me love, awaken,
List . . . song to-night;
For . . . forsaken,
. . . me soul's delight."

"Oh, Miss Nettie," sighed Barbara, ecstatically, "hain't hit 'eavenly? Hain't it beau-ti-ful? He's the knight hin disguise — a count, maybe — hand just to think, Miss, of havin'

a lover sit hunder one's winder and sing you to wake — o-o-oh! —”

Here Barbara clapped her hands convulsively from very joy.

“Lady . . . me heart's devotion,
For . . . I'd gladly die;
. . . me heart's emotion
Rises to thee tenderly.”

sang the troubadour. Then there was a sudden hoist of a window, an indignant head thrust out, and an indignant voice growled out:

“Shut up that confounded noise, can't you? What do you mean by arousing honest folks by your infernal caterwauling?”

Whereupon the troubadour shouldered his guitar and came out into full view of my window.

“Oh! Miss,” sighed Barbara, “it's jest like a play — yers the beautiful maiden; yer's the lover, who's 'eart's like to break; hand yere's the hangry father, 'e'll forbid your lover to speak to you; hand you'll meet him hin the harbor; hand — hand — oh, Miss! he's agoin', hand you haven't throwed him nothin'!”

I took Barbara's reproachful hint, disengaged a rosebud from the bouquet on the table and let it fall. The troubadour picked it up, pressed it to his heart (I thought so then; I'm afraid now that he only put it in his pocket) and walked away, urged thereto by my father's impatient: “Come, come! you'd better be off. It's a confounded cold night to take a shower bath.”

“Oh, Miss Nettie,” sighed Barbara, reluctantly drawing her head in from the window; “'ow happy you must be, 'aving a lover which is unbeknown, hand a guitar which is a fine singer, hand an unfeeling father to horder him hoff, hand a harbor to meet him hin.”

Now, though I am quite as romantic as my little maid, I frowned upon her volubility, and sent her away. As she left the room, I heard the attic window above mine slide cautiously down. Susan, the cook, slept there. I thought no more of it.

I closed my window, stirred up my fire, and sat down to get warm and to dream of my lover. He was that, I knew — the first lover that I had ever had. Where had he met me? Had he seen me at church, and followed me home? Had he seen me

on the street, or my face at the window, and then and there been captivated? I could not say I did not wish to know. The delightful mystery but added a charm to the reality.

I went to bed, and I think I must have dreamed of my troubadour quite as much as my little maid, though the next morning she brought me timidly a copy of the verses she had written, and said:

"I was thinkin', Miss Nettie, hif hi had a lover as come hunder my window, 'ow I'd give him these tender verses, hand I writ these."

They ran thus, as Barbara read them:

"Ho, dear one w'ich is unbeknown,
Who lingerest hat my winder;
Who plays hon 'is guitar halone,
W'en there hain't no one to hinder.

"Some knight you must be in disguise,
Nor 'twouldn't be surprisin';
Fur knights, hunless our 'istry lies,
Was allus for disguisin'.

"But who you hare I cannot say,
Sinse hi ham not so knowin';
Hi honly saw the tender way
You 'ad w'en you was goin'."

"W'en that stern voice —"

"That's your father I meant there," said Barbara, holding her finger on the line; "hit was more poetic-like than sayin' Mr. Croft's, you know. Where was hi? Oh, yes,

"When that stern voice so cruel-ly
Between hour fon 'earts comin',
Jest as you sed fur me you'd die,
Stopt hall your pleasant thrummin'."

"That's hall I've got writ, Miss," said Barbara, apologetically, as she finished the poem. "But I've got more like h'it hin my head."

"Keep it there, Barbara," I said severely. "I should advise you to keep it there, by all means."

Barbara blushed, and hung her head. Two, three, four nights, and no more of my troubadour. It was all in vain that

I left my lamp burn late, and kept the shades up; equally in vain that I put out the lamp, and drew down the shades. He came not. Barbara was in raptures — I, in misery. You understand our relative situations: Barbara was looking at a romance, and I (as I fancied) was living one. My father went away for two weeks. The night after his departure, it was nearly midnight before I caught the first strains of the guitar. My little maid was just as quick. (It's my belief the little minx had been listening at the parlor window.) She came rushing into my apartment, sans ceremonie, and cried, "Oh, Miss Nettie, 'e's come back. The hangry father's gone haway, hand the hinnercent lover's come back." And there he was, sure enough. This time he played a gay waltz, keeping time with a very heavy foot.

"Hain't hit 'eavenly?" Barbara was out of breath. After the waltz another song, and then my troubadour stepped boldly out into the moonlight — then he called out in a hoarse voice:

"Darlin', are ye there?"

"Hanswer 'im, Miss Nettie," pleaded Barbara, clasping her pudgy little hands together in an agony of suspense. "For 'eaven's sake don't be the cruel girl an' him the despairin' lover. Hanswer 'im hand be happy."

Not wishing to spoil my flirtation by being a "cruel girl," I prepared to reply, when my eager lover interrupted me at the first syllable.

"I know it, me darlin', me 'art told me so. Cum down to me arms, me own. Cum down."

"Barbara," says I, "I'm afraid he's not an educated gentleman. He says darlin' and 'art."

"And what helse should he say but 'art, Miss Nettie?" questioned the girl. "Sure ham I that's only excitement; 'e's hedicated, Miss, that 'e his." Here Barbara struck an attitude. "Then, oh, cruel one, suppose he does say darlin', would you break 'is 'art, ruin 'is future, hand destroy 'is 'appiness for one letter. Ho, Miss Nettie, don't, I himplore you, don't."

"Well, I won't then, Barbara. I'll speak to him."

I leaned out the window and saw my troubadour standing expectantly near the side-gate. Before I could speak, I was astonished to see the gate slowly open, and a figure — a female

figure, emerge. My troubadour sprang toward her and folded her in his embrace.

"Ho, Miss," said Barbara, gasping, "hain't hit 'orrible — hain't hit for hall the world like a story. Ho, hain't hit glorious?"

"Hark?" whispered I, "I want to hear."

"Suckie, I knew ye'd come to me, darlin'—me darlin'," whereupon "suckie" lifted her face and disclosed to my astonished vision the ruddy face of Susan, the cook.

"Lawk," cried Barbara, "hif that ain't Susan Cummins; he don't know nothin'; han, Miss Nettie, the man's Mr. Scrip's coachman, what Mr. Croft said shouldn't come here, 'cause he gets so drunk. Hit's Tom Scroggins, Miss. Ho, hain't hit hawful?"

"Shut that window, Barbara, and go to your room. What do you mean by letting my room get so chilly. Bring your head in, this minute. Do you hear me?" Poor little Barbara went to her room after this deserved rebuke; and Tom Scroggins, with his Susan, wandered up and down the walk. I heard their steps beneath my window as Morpheus enslaved me. So ended my first romance.

For the *New York Mercury*. February 2, 1867.

FATE

"There it is again!" And there it was, sure enough, easy, graceful, flowing, and sensible — a marginal criticism upon the very first page of that quaint and tantalizing little volume, "Yeast," which, like a curious child, propounds questions too deep for the wisest of men to answer; and, like a will-o'-the-wisp, leads its followers into swamps, only to leave them in utter darkness, groping their way out again. It is, after all, as its name indicates, but yeast, which may or may not "leaven up the whole lump."

But I am not writing a criticism on the book. I was simply intending to say that Horace Lynn found such along its margin, penciled in an easy, graceful, flowing feminine hand, and that at sight of it he cried out suddenly, "There it is again!"

"There's what again?" asked Charles, lifting his eyes from the laborious task of teasing the kitten.

"Why, this indefatigable, graceful critic. She has preceded me in every book I have read the last six months, and left her pencil marks on them all."

"Nothing very wonderful in that," said Charlie, stroking his beardless chin. "These women must always be scribbling their names over everything. Some 'blue' is reading the library through, and takes this method of letting people know."

"No, that's the oddity. She hasn't left the first letter of her name on any one of them, and she never writes when she has nothing to say. She points out anachronisms, and gives her opinion clearly and concisely. The fact of the matter is, she's worth knowing, and I'm going to know her."

"An old-maid 'blue' you'll find her, or somebody's wife," said Charlie, seizing the cat, and vacating the apartment with one bound. Evidently he preferred other company.

Once alone, Horace Lynn fell to dreaming of the fair handwriting on the page before him, as he had often done of late, until the writer rose embodied — a sweet vision — perhaps the brighter for being such a far-off, unattainable dream. His ideal of loveliness had, of course, blue-black hair, dark eyes, cherry lips, and white teeth; but for the writer of these marginal notes he decided nothing. He never thought of her as handsome or homely. She was to him the embodiment of a pure, sweet, womanly mind, which could reason in a straightforward, and truthful way, and express itself simply and concisely.

"Of course," thought Horace, "it's very silly and all that, to make such a fuss over a woman's scribbling in a book of a public library; and it's out of taste for any one to write in these books; but I'd like to see the writer of them anyway; though, I dare say, as Charlie says, she'd be an old-maid blue or somebody's wife. Well, it would be a satisfaction to know for a certainty. She's a great reader, anyhow. 'Washington's Life,' 'Galadays,' 'Quits,' 'Yeast,' 'Browning,' 'Aldrich,' and a dozen others I've seen that she has read. I'm booked to find out this girl; so here goes for an abode in a dusty old library. Dick'll be glad of a holiday, I dare say; and I'll chase up those numbers in short order."

Always impulsive, Horace took his hat and walked to the library. It was open, and he entered its quiet precincts with that feeling of reverence we all feel upon entering a quiet, darkened room. He traversed the long hall where two slovenly-looking maids were perpetually mopping up the painted floor, which never looked any fresher, and from there into the sanctum sanctorum, where long rows of books stared blankly at him, and half a dozen men looked up curiously from their papers.

Horace walked up to the desk, slapped the thin librarian on the shoulder, and ignoring the law of silence, or necessary conversation in whispers, cried out:

"How are you, Dick?"

"Hush, not so loud," whispered Dick, "I'm not feeling first rate."

"Want a holiday?" asked Horace, not a whit lower than before.

Dick's face brightened, then the light faded out suddenly.

"I'd like it, but can't get off," adding "but you mustn't be so noisy."

"Isn't there any place in this confounded old nutshell where a man can speak above his breath?" was the impatient rejoinder. "If there is I'd like to go there."

The librarian, after satisfying himself that no one needed his service at that moment, led the way into an inner room, followed by Horace and the curious, half-indignant glances of the readers whose labors he had sadly interrupted, and yet whose learned brains were the clearer, I dare say, for the very hearing of his fresh, hearty voice.

When a man resolutely goes to work to make a bookworm of himself, he is very nearly insane or has a palpable weakness in some part of his head. He trades off his own thoughts, and feelings, and fancies, for those of other people's. They may be wiser, and better, and brighter, than his own; but it is like exchanging one's own children for those of other people. And who would rather have a prince of the blood than the very ordinary darling of one's own heart? It is all very well and right to educate, beautify, and improve him as much as possible, but never, never to trade him off. Yet this man does so. The

freshness, and youth, and beauty, go out from his heart like sunshine from a shut-up rose. He becomes but an album scrawled over with the autographs and thoughts of other people, and he himself is gone forever buried like poor, foolish, false Tarpeia, under too great a weight of treasure. It was this style of man, the little withered man in the corner and that gray, shivering old gentleman hugging the cold stove, that Horace brushed past as he entered the next room. They drew deep breaths as people are apt to do when entering pure, fresh air. He was such a breezy, invigorating face and smile. Even the librarian felt it; for he had no sooner shut the door in the faces of the "worms," than he greeted Horace anew with:

"How are you, Horry?"

"I'm jolly," said Horace, "the fact of the matter is, I've been to Aunt Hannah's and she agrees with my constitution. Bread, butter, milk, etc. By-the-way, Dick, that cousin of mine, little Bess, is a trump, and no mistake."

Dick blushed at that faintly. Horace wondered why.

"I say, Dick, suppose you try it. Aunt Hannah said for you to come right out."

This I am bound by native truthfulness to declare was an unmitigated fib on Horace's part; but he consoled himself by the reflection that she probably would have sent such a message had she seen how pale Dick was looking.

"I'd like it," replied Dick, slowly; "but you see it's no use; I can't leave here, Horry. Bessie isn't engaged or anything of that sort, is she?"

"My sakes! man, you've twisted that out of shape now — my best one, too. What did you say? Bess engaged? I dare say she is, to half a dozen. She's something of a flirt, and queens it over her country beaux quite royally. Had a slave of me a week. But after all, Dick, she's a true girl; and I dare say she is waiting for your great, solemn eyes to light up her heart."

This Horace said out of pure kindness of heart, seeing faintly how the land lay. It had the effect of coloring Dick's effeminate face prettily, and he exclaimed, impatiently:

"I wish I could go."

"So you can, old boy; I'll take your place for a month!"

“ You! ”

“ Yes, why not? I’ve nothing special to do until after then; so come, pack up, and clear out. Kiss pretty Bess for me, and get yourself well again.”

Dick went.

How the old library altered! The pale, soft-stepping, soft-spoken shadow no more added to its gloomy ghostliness; but in its place came a cheery, noisy vagabond, who never knew where anything was, and never could keep quiet. One or two of the book-worms, with undisguised contempt for his clatter, seized their quartos and indignantly stalked out of the apartment, while the little withered old man was heard to laugh outright, a deed that he was ashamed of hours afterwards, bending with more than usually severe face over Plato. But Horace never thought of amusing these old gentlemen. He was busy chasing numbers through the checkbook, and in a constant state of amazement at their mysterious disappearances and reappearances. No person seemed to have read the seven books of the series, until finally he could trace half a dozen to Mary Jane Smith; but the seventh was wanting, so another track must be taken, only to result in an equal failure. Horace rode his hobby untiringly for two weeks — a weary ride even when the ride is a hobby, and,

“ First he goes up, then he goes down,
And still horsey gets you no nearer to town.”

So with Horace. At the end of two weeks he was, in truth, “ no nearer town.” He had, it is true, an idea; but, after all, only an idea taken from a pretty name which he had found very often on his books and decided the name was the name of his womanly critic, Aurora Armstrong.

She had read over those books, but so had many others; yet he clung to her, and waited until she should come.

It was twilight in the dim old library. Gaunt shadows were beginning to creep stealthily out from the corners, and the busy readers were edging toward the windows and lifting their papers.

Horace, tired and disappointed, bent wearily over his books, almost envying his pale cousin the holiday he had vouchsafed. Suddenly he lifted his head. A woman’s voice had pronounced a name.

“Aurora!”

The heavy oaken doors swung noiselessly on their hinges, and Aurora stood in its frame.

The shadows sank to the corners again, and the room brightened in her smile. Even the bookworms twisted their faces into a cheerful scowl at sight of her face. Tall, willowy, slender, with fair curling hair bound back from a beautiful brow, and clear blue eyes whose sweetness was beyond comparison, white-handed, rose-lipped, she dawned upon him in that dim old library at the twilight-hour.

“She,” said Horace to his own heart yet in truthful earnestness, “She is my darling.”

Is there such a thing as love at first sight? If not, why did that pretty creature stand there, faintly flushing beneath his gaze, until her mother, standing back, urged:

“Go in, Aurora, and get your book.” And when she did go in, swaying lightly, did she pause and hesitate before asking the very commonplace question:

“Is ‘Charles O’Malley’ in?”

“No,” said Horace, “it will be in this evening.”

“Charles O’Malley” was innocently lying under his very eyes as Horace uttered this very doubtful assertion.

“I will send it around if you will leave your number.”

Send it around indeed. She knew very well who would carry that book around.

“That will do, my dear,” said Aurora’s mother. “The gentleman is very kind. Give him the number.”

Aurora obeyed, and the two ladies left the room together.

How dark the old library seemed to Horace then! How it settled into darker and gloomier shadows! How the vague twilight resumed its sway now that day was gone!

You will think Horace silly. He was; but it was a silliness which, like an attack of measles, must be gone through by every boy, and the earlier the better. Horace, standing at his desk in the reading-room and library, would have settled at once that long debated question regarding love at first sight. He would say:

“There is such a love, for I have felt it. There is a certain affinity, a drawing together that is beyond argument or

reasoning, equally beyond doubt." And knowing absolutely nothing of Aurora Armstrong, he would have been willing then and there to claim her for his own.

That evening, after the library was closed, Horace, armed with "Charles O'Malley," took his way leisurely to the home of Aurora. He wondered if he should see her, and thought with a sinking heart, what if she was away, or worse, did not care to be seen! He longed to know if she, at that moment's interview, had recognized her fate, as he had done, and reasoned on the subject quite as sagely as young men of a romantic temperament, and in love, generally do. While he was yet thinking of her, he saw her pretty golden-curled head in the window over the way. How fair she was — lit up by the gleams of gaslight. Horace thought he had never seen so fair a creature, and his loving heart then and there bent to do her beauty homage. He crossed the street, lingeringly, unwilling to risk the presence of his charmer lest it should not prove so heart-cheering as the picture. He rang the bell, and heard her light step in the hall. He thought that he should know her step anywhere, foolish fellow. It was only the tidy little maid, and Aurora was yet crushing her pretty curls against the window-panes. Horace followed the girl to the parlor, and Aurora smiled as though she was very glad to see him. Minutes, golden-winged, fluttered away, and Horace rose to go.

"Would he come again?" asked Aurora. "She knew his cousin Dick very well indeed, and would like to know him better."

So Horace found the critic whose marginal notes had delighted him. He went often, and was surprised to find Aurora more of a child than the woman he fancied had written those notes. He loved her, and that was enough for him; "blue," or baby, she was still Aurora.

Two weeks more and Dick returned, with a sturdy ringing step and a flush upon his pale cheek, bringing with him the pretty cousin Bess, who had been the cause of his blushing and stammering once. Dick wasn't just ready to marry, but he was rather doubtful of the expediency of leaving Bessie to wander at her own sweet will among her adoring country-beaux. He found she was sometimes inclined to snub him, and

institute comparisons rather unfavorable to himself; and so, like the wise man that he was, he gathered his flower in the faint flush and freshness of early love, daring poverty to do its worst, while true hearts stood their ground, and busy hands were ever willing.

He went back to the dim old library, and in lieu of rattling, noisy Horace, Bessie sometimes put her fresh, pretty face into the old apartment. But Horace — well, the hours that he had formerly devoted to the library, which, somehow had got to be a great bore to him after he had found Aurora, hung heavy on his hands, and therefore he was apt to devote them to the most pleasant occupation within reach, viz., holding skeins of silk and worsted for Aurora.

It was not a money-making business, Horace confessed as much to himself quite often in the solitude of his chamber; nor was it a labor calculated to improve his mind, but — and this was his invariable conclusion — “it was deuced pleasant, and she was such a darling.”

“Do you know, my dear, what first made me love you?” asked Horace, one evening, when “his dear” was beside him.

Aurora shook her pretty head.

“I’m sure I don’t, Horry. It was fate, I think.”

“Not at all,” replied he. “It was my own good common-sense, Miss Aurie. I found your criticisms in the books that you had read, and I made up my mind you were the girl for me, so I took Dick’s place, and traced you out by the numbers. It was tedious work, but I conquered; I couldn’t give up a girl who could write so sensibly very willingly, so I made a vow I’d marry you just from those notes.”

Aurora lifted her pretty face with a puzzled air.

“Notes? Criticisms? Why, I’m sure I never wrote a criticism in my life! It’s all I can do to write to mamma when she’s out of town, and then I always forget half I meant to say. I don’t understand you, dear old boy! What books do you mean?”

“Why ‘Yeast,’ ‘Washington’s Life,’ ‘Browning,’ ‘Aldrich,’ and the rest. You know them, Aurie.”

“Know them? I should think so. Why Horry, dear, what a goose you are. And you vowed to marry the woman who

read those books. Oh, you dear, foolish boy, how silly! how silly!"

Here Aurora broke down completely in the sweetest, clearest, silvery laugh that ever rippled over coral lips; and Horace, just because of its delightful infection, and not that he had the least understanding of the matter, joined her.

"Horace, you've seen Mrs. Billins, haven't you?"

"The little sallow woman who teaches you music and French, etc.? I've seen her. Not a great beauty either."

"No, but the dearest woman. She has five children and a drunken husband, and supports them all by her teaching and her pen. She takes books from the library in my name, and I expect wrote the notes you were so pleased with. And now, Horry dear, that you know that I'm not clever, ain't you going to love me any more? I don't know one word of Latin, and wouldn't dare to criticize 'Mother Goose' itself."

Not love her any more? Horace couldn't help loving her. He kissed the pretty lips so temptingly uplifted, and whispered:

"I am a convert to your creed, my darling. It was fate."

Let me add, that because of this story, young ladies must not go to writing marginal criticisms, since nine-tenths of the librarians are foolishly unromantic, and practical, and would be more likely to exact fines for the defacing of volumes than to fall in love with the writer thereof.

For the *New York Mercury*. February 9, 1867.

TRIED

I sprang from the uncomfortable old couch with a sigh of relief, stretched my toes in my gaiters, and shook out the wrinkles of my traveling-dress. It had rained for at least ten miles of our journey, and through the leaky roof the drops had pattered ceaselessly upon the heads and shoulders of its occupants. There were nine of us, a coachful and somewhat over; a lean, consumptive man, with a cough and a wheeze, whose linen duster was almost saturated with rain; a fat, rosy-faced middle-aged man, whom one instinctively decided was a butcher, and his

wife, also fat and rosy-faced, enveloped in any number of wrappings. Then there was a man of lean visage and sour face — some village pedagogue, mayhaps, who growled at the rain, at the crowd, and even at his little daughter squeezed uncomfortably between his knees; two young misses out to visit some Western aunt; a young gentleman of no particular attractions, and myself, completed the company. The gentleman sitting at my side, whom I have designated as having no particular attractions, I found very useful. He was not very handsome, though his clear, intelligent eyes and pleasant mouth gave him some claim to good looks. He had beautiful light-brown hair, curling slightly, and there his good looks ended. His face was scarred somewhat, and weather-worn; his dress was neither rich nor handsome, although most comfortable; and he sat buried in a newspaper, and utterly regardless of the chilling drops which fell regularly upon his hat and coat. He never changed his position in the seat, nor seemed conscious of the unpleasant drenching to which he was being gradually subjected. He had the leakiest corner of that very leaky vehicle, but didn't seem conscious of the fact until the butcher's wife said, plaintively:

"Deary me, sir! Here we're a grumblin' and a grumblin', and after all you're gettin' much the worst of it an' don't say a word. Some o' you gentlemen ought to take that wet corner for a time. Hadn't you?"

To this suggestion there was no reply, only the village-school-master edged somewhat closer into his corner, and drew his little daughter after him. The gentleman who had excited her sympathy smiled, and replied, cheerily:

"Oh, never mind me, madam. I don't mind a drop of rain more or less. I'm used to it."

"Been a soljer, maybe?" suggested the butcher.

"Yes," was the reply. "For four years."

"Seen some lively times, no doubt, sir?" questioned the school-master to which the gentleman replied by giving a lively and amusing account of an adventure that he had met with near Vicksburg.

Finding that he could amuse the company, the stranger good-naturedly laid aside his paper and went to work. He

talked rapidly and well, changing his topics too often to admit of weariness in the listener, and seemed to have thoughts for every one of his fellow-passengers. My cloak fell from my shoulders and he replaced it, adding thereto the cape of his own as a further shield; the child of the school-master fretting uncomfortably, he took on his knee, and even kept the consumptive gentleman in troches, thereby easing his cough. I became interested in my fellow-passenger. He had such tact, such versatility of talent, such genial, whole-hearted manliness; and when the coach stopped at my friend's door, I was almost sorry to bid him farewell; but against that sorrow I put the freedom from the wet and dreary coach, the clear grate-fire that welcomed me in Mrs. Gary's cozy parlor, and dear little Mrs. Gary's own sweet self; I decided that I had the best of the bargain, and consequently drew a sigh of relief. The coach rattled on over the stony street; my fellow-passengers settled again in their seats; I saw the school-master's daughter placed in mine, lately vacated, and then I went into the house.

Ellen Chadwick and I had been dear old school friends. She was a pretty, blue-eyed little creature, born rather for loving, than leading. In her school days I had been her idol and her guide; but now that she had married, I think it never occurred to her to doubt the infallibility of her husband, Harry Gary. Still her warm heart clung fondly to old friends; and when she heard of my failing health, she urged my visiting her. I consented, and upon this rainy August day first entered Nellie's home.

"I wonder," said Nellie, the next day, as we sat before the grate, for it was still raining and chill, "I wonder who'll be in to-night. I told Henry Fish and Chad Burlingame to come in; but Chad is out of town, and I'm afraid he hasn't returned."

"Who is Chad Burlingame?" I asked, taking somehow an interest in the name.

Nellie laughed, hesitated a little, and covered her hesitation by kissing her baby a score or more times, then said:

"Chad! Oh, he's one of my favorites; a kind of second-cousin, you know; but you'll not like him, my dear, I dare say. Henry Fish will be infinitely more to your taste. He's a nice

fellow — handsome, well-off, pleasant and agreeable; but Hubbie" (her pet contraction of husband) "says that Chad is worth ten of him. You can judge for yourself. Vic, dear don't be shocked. You're so proud, you know, but I must tell you that Chad is a blacksmith. He's just as much of a gentleman, my dear, and we think everything of him; and he can't help having a trade, now can he, dear?"

"I'm sure I don't know what he can help, Nell, and I'm equally sure I don't care," I returned, annoyed that my predilection for a name had led to the choice of a blacksmith, and the ignoring of a gentleman.

"Oh dear," sighed Nell, dolefully, putting her pretty face on her baby's head. "I suppose you'll hate him now, and I've done it. Vic, you're very proud. Harry says that's the worst trait about you. Don't be angry, dear, but in republican America, a gentleman is a gentleman wherever you find him, and you oughtn't to curl your lip that way."

Nell was right. I, in theory, never curled my lip at honest toil; in practice, always. I upheld and honored the man whose hands were honestly browned with toil, as a hero; but so far in life I had kept my softer palms from contact with these. It never occurred to me that I, Victoria Granger, was practicing the very fault that I decried. It never occurred to me that if these workingmen were gentlemen, they should be treated as such. After all, I was but a theorist. How I learned "to practice what I preached," you shall hear.

That evening, while baby slept in her crib, and mamma rocked her, softly singing, half to herself, half to the little one, the gentleman came in, Harry Fish answering Nellie's description perfectly, slightly inane, slightly foppish, I thought, as he whipped his polished boot with his slender gold headed cane, but altogether gentlemanly.

Before I had well studied this man, although he was not much of a study, Mr. Burlingame came in. At the introduction I lifted my eyes so slightly that I did not see his face.

"I believe that I have had the pleasure of seeing Miss Granger under less agreeable circumstances," said Mr. Burlingame.

Then I looked up. Clear, intelligent eyes, pleasant mouth,

and light curling hair of a verity. I saw my genial stage-coach-friend and companion, whose cape had kept my shoulders warm. I gave him my hand, letting it linger in his firm, hard palm a second with a feeling that it was in good keeping, and then we sat down to evening gossip. Here, as in the stage-coach Chadwick Burlingame showed infinite tact in the selection of his subjects. He was equally at home criticising Nell's new bonnet and describing the excellencies of Fish's new span. He even showed his aptitude for baby-tending by winning Nell's little girl to his arms the moment she opened her eyes. From the first I liked Chadwick Burlingame.

As days passed I saw very much of both these gentlemen. There were not very many young folks in the village, and as a matter of course, we met very often.

I rode with Henry Fish, praised his team, and learned to drive to my heart's content. I walked with Chad Burlingame, read his books and listened to his conversation with great pleasure. He was one of the few people of whom I never tired. He, with his consummate tact, left his friends at perfect liberty, chiming in their moods and leading them, rather than himself, to talk. We became good friends. I used to stand at my windows and watch the red light in the blacksmith-shop as it shone like a lurid star from surrounding darkness. I used to wonder if he never had a feeling of hatred for that shop — for the trade — for his toil-hardened hands and his laborious life.

One evening — it was a warm, clear October evening, as I stood at my window, the impulse seized me to go over and see him work. It was early yet, not six o'clock, and yet not very light. I threw on my hat and walked briskly across the street, down to the shop door. It stood open. Within, the men were very busy. The scene was like a magic picture, the great fires burning on either side of the shop shot their white flames roaring and cracking up the chimney, while men worked the huge bellows. On the anvil lay the red-hot iron, while a master-hand, with sharp, clear, ringing blows, molded it. In the background, lit fantastically by the fires, I could see wheels and hoops and all sorts of iron implements. As I stood in the door silently looking at the scene, Chad came from one of the fires.

"Miss Granger, can it be possible?"

"Just possible," I replied; "I want to see the inside of your shop; may I come in?"

"Certainly — take care, that iron is at white-heat — don't lay your hand on that tire; it is hot yet. I begin to think that I had better refuse admittance if you are so careless."

But he did not. Instead, he led me around, and explained to me all the minutiae, and finally seated me in a great rustic chair, to see the men work.

"What a pleasant sight!" I said. "I like to sit here."

"Yes," he replied, half dreamily, "there is a romance even about blacksmithing. To me there is poetry in shoeing a horse. Look at that one there; see how patient, how quietly that animal stands there. See how the light falls on his glossy coat; note his graceful bearing and that shadowy background. Is it not fine?"

Standing before me, one hand resting on the arm of my chair, Chad Burlingame spoke of himself and of me. "I knew you," he said softly, too softly for mere friendship; "I knew you well, Miss Granger, even in that stage-coach."

"Not so," I replied, with a half smile, "I am afraid you do not know me now."

"Not know you now? Have I studied this form for two months unavailingly?"

There was that in his voice which made me lift my eyes. They met his own clearly and openly. I knew then what I have never doubted since — that Chad Burlingame loved me. Yet was no such word spoken, no caress given. I rose up, drew my shawl closer about me, and said I must go home.

"It was not prudent of you to come alone," he said; "but I will see you safely back."

I took his offered arm, looking back as I left the shop with a great pain in my heart. That I loved this man I knew; that he was my equal, I never doubted; but — and my fierce English blood rose at that — "could I ally myself with a mechanic?" and my pride answered, "Never!" So in such a mood, I heard and answered Chad Burlingame's question that night.

"Is this final?" he asked, standing at the gate.

"It is final," I replied.

"Then, indeed, I never knew you."

Those bitter words. All night long they rang in my ears; ah, and for many a night before they bore fruit. For one whole week I saw nothing of Chad Burlingame; nothing, I mean, but sometimes his tall form at the shop door, and occasionally I met him on the street. At such times he touched his hat and passed, searching my face always with those keen eyes.

"It seems to me, Vic, that Fish has cut Burlingame out," said Nellie one evening, as Fish left the door. "Well, it's a better match, I think, though Harry says Chad would suit you better."

"I couldn't marry a common blacksmith, Nell," I replied.

"Well," said Nell, "that's your pride. I told Harry that you wouldn't; but he said there was a heroic element in you, or something of that kind, that would overcome pride. Chad is a gentleman, my dear, and was as rich as you are — far richer — until two years ago, when his father died. When they came to settle up the estate, they found a great deal had been lost in speculating. What was left after settling, proved just sufficient for the support of his mother and sisters; so Chad settled it all on them, and was penniless. His mother is an invalid, and she cannot bear to have her son away from her. He knows that she cannot live long, and will not leave her. In a village like this, there was nothing that he could do but what he did. Mr. Crane offered him the overseeing of his shop and Chad accepted. There's the whole story, my dear; and, for my part, I like Chad all the better for it. He's too good for you, by half, you naughty pride."

So saying, Nell kissed me more tenderly than her words would imply that she felt, tossed her baby to her shoulder, and went off singing.

I arose and went to the window. From the shop I could see the lurid light, although I knew that the men were gone. By the door I saw a tall form that I knew even by that uncertain light. This, then, was the man that I had deigned to scorn. This, then, was the man who had learned to love me.

"If I had a lover
Who was noble and free
I would he were nobler
Than to love me,"

I thought. Below me, the deserted street, and that one bright light; above me, the clear moon and silent stars; within, the crying of a loving heart that had been untrue to itself.

Always impulsive, I now donned hat and cloak for the pleasure of an evening walk. It was ten o'clock, and the streets were almost quiet; but I wanted to see the light nearer; I wanted to see Chad Burlingame, and tell him how I honored him for his constancy to his mother. Swiftly I threaded the streets. The door stood open. I entered, scarcely knowing what I did.

He was standing by the huge fireplace with one hand on the bellows. His face looked paler than its wont; but it might be the flame.

"Mr. Burlingame!"

He started, turned, and came toward me. In his face I could read but surprise at seeing me.

"Miss Granger!"

His manner asked "What is the matter?"

"I have heard your story to-night," I said, simply, "and I want to tell you how much I honor you."

He took my hand and searched my face.

"Have you anything else you want to tell me?" he asked, slowly, as though he weighed every word. "Do not trifle with me now, I beg of you. Miss Granger, tell me truly, is this all your lips will utter?"

"No; I would beg pardon for my scorn the other night. You must think that I honor you instead."

"Is that all?"

Was it all? I do not know. Some way, the ruddy light flamed up in my face, and Chad Burlingame's eyes were full of happy tears; some way I forgot the old blacksmith-shop, the toil-hardened hands, and my pride; some way, when he called me his darling, I could not help feeling glad. And so it all was.

The next day I received the following note:

"My Darling: — You must not be angry; but we have been playing a little drama. Now, I will tell you all about it. Nellie's story was true enough, so far as it went. The trouble was, it didn't go far enough. Last year, my grandfather left his

estate to me. I never did desire much wealth; but, after it came, I found it very pleasant. I had heard of you so frequently from Nellie, that I felt quite an interest in you. Speaking one evening of your pride, Nellie said: 'But there's no chance for you, Chad. She hates mechanics.' Thereupon, we built our little farce. I took my shop into my own hands, and — you know the rest. My darling, did I not know you truly?
"CHAD."

I read the note. I did not feel half as happy as I was annoyed that I was tricked. Then the "heroic element" which Harry Gary had discovered was fully aroused. I was rather sorry not to be a martyr for Chad's sake; but, after all, I think I bore the reverse with a becoming spirit since I let Harry laugh at me, and Nell kiss me to her heart's content, since I even did not scold Chad when he sent me a set of charms for my chatelaine, in which a golden anvil, hammer, and bellows figured largely.

For the *New York Mercury*. February 23, 1867.

DOWN THE DEE

"Girls, girls," shouted Bess Neil, rushing into the village schoolroom at their "nooning"; "what news I have heard you'll never guess. I think it's the best thing."

"What is it, Bess?" "Tell us, do!" "Don't be mean, Bess!" "Out with the news!" etc., was echoed and re-echoed from every part of the room, where on tables, and benches, and desks, the school girls were enjoying their lunches. Only one, a dark, quiet girl, sitting at her own desk, with her head leaning on her hand, did not evince the least curiosity.

"Come, Bess," pleaded Nell Gwyn, affectionately twining her arms about the tantalizing courier; "come, tell us."

"Of course, I'll tell you, but I'd like to get my breath first. Mr. Lennox is getting up a party to go boating down the Dee in a few weeks. He came to see Will about it, and I heard of it. There are to be twenty couples and I'm going with Dick Wilson. Isn't it glorious?"

The news was hailed with universal delight, and young couples began speculating upon their beaux, possible and probable, until the arrival of Mr. Lennox himself — who had charge of the village school that summer — when the subject was dropped.

Through all the noise and applause, the dark-eyed girl in the corner never lifted her head, though a close observer might have noticed that she never turned a page, and that one or two tears slipped silently down her face. She failed, too, in her lessons the next hour; and Mr. Lennox when he reprimanded her, thought her face sullen, and took a sudden dislike to the girl. It never occurred to him that she might be unhappy.

This girl, Anise Gray, tall, slender, dark of eye and hair, might have been pretty but for the heavy, sad look that was habitual to her face. Orphaned from childhood, sensitive beyond most children, the dependant upon a fashionable, selfish aunt, Anise (comfortably clad, and fed though she was) bore daily and hourly trials before which many a stout heart would bow, and long — as weak little Anise did, all summer long — to be at rest under the clover.

Anise never had a childhood. She made no mud-pies, climbed no fences, knew no pretty plays, made no clover-wreaths. She had a doll dressed in pink satin, wonderfully beautiful to childish Anise, which she held daintily on company days, wondering if God made its eyes so black, and its curls so soft; but she had no romping, happy, merry infancy. Excluded from the parlor by her aunt, and from the nursery by her exacting, tyrannical cousins she grew up alone. A dark, silent, unloving, unlovable child, she walked with a certain, stately grace and dignity from infancy to girlhood. She attended school, read books, and dreamed dreams. That was her life.

"A sullen, disagreeable creature," said her cousin, Sybil Ward, and I'm afraid she spoke only the popular impression, after all.

"That girl's got all her heart can wish," said indignant Nancy Green; "and here she's just as sullen and ungrateful as can be. I'd pack her off, bag and baggage."

The day after the announcement of the expected boat-ride, Percy Lennox, strolling toward the schoolhouse, came suddenly upon Anise Gray. She was standing in the lane, pressing open

the waxen leaves of a water-lily and peering down into its fragrant heart with a beautiful smile transfiguring her face. He paused involuntarily. Was this the face he had thought uninteresting, and had scarcely cared to notice? Now he took its beauty to his heart. He passed her silently; but the graceful, slender form, the waving brown hair, the clear, oval face, the long, half-drooping lashes, and sweet half-parted lips, and above all, that childish happy smile upon a face too liable to sadness, haunted him.

"Evangeline," he said to himself. "Sunshine of St. Eulalie."

With an irresistible desire to see the face again, he turned back. She had been unaware of his passing. He paused now and bent his kindly blue eyes upon her rapt face.

"Are you wondering," asked he, "how those lily-caves are peopled?"

She started at the sound of his voice, raised her head suddenly, almost guiltily, but he was glad to see the smile did not leave her eyes as they met his.

"Have you never dreamed, Anise, that flowers may be a region of beautiful worlds, inhabited by fairy-like people? I wonder if our human eyes will ever be strong enough to see them as they are?"

Anise smiled that same rare smile with which she had looked at the lily.

"Perhaps," she said, half-shyly; "our world is like a lily in the hands of God. I used to think that the stars were his flowers."

"Perhaps so, Anise. We shall know one day. You are going home. I will see you safely within the gate."

Turning his step, Percy Lennox and Anise walked slowly down the lane, under the heavy maples, and so to the little gate which led up to the walk at Miss Ward's. At the gate, Percy took the lily from her hand.

"I will study out its secrets, visit its hidden caves, and let you know," he said, lightly. "Good-night, Evangeline."

Anise walked swiftly up the path, her heart fluttering strangely and happily. Why had he taken the lily? Why had he called her Evangeline? Had her teacher, her example,

found at last something to like in her? Foolish child! She had been so frowned upon that she had learned to think there was nothing worthy about her — had learned to frown upon herself more sternly than them all.

From that day, Percy Lennox studied Anise Gray as he might a new and strange book. His face was always in sunshine for her. No reprimand, no coldness; and the sensitive plant expanded beneath the genial influence. School had been indifferent to Anise, now it was pleasure; and Percy read anew in her dark face the sweet poem of Evangeline.

"Girls," cried Bess, who had always found out everything before anybody else, as she rushed into the schoolroom two weeks later; "we'll go on Thursday. The boys will invite the girls to-day. I'm all right. Won't we be happy?"

"I'm so glad," said Anise, lifting her glowing face from her book.

"What in the world are you glad for?" asked Sybil, with a covert sneer. "Who'll take you, I wonder? Lame Johnny Dickerson, or blind old Tom? Now, Mr. Lennox has almost engaged me, and we can't be troubled with you, I can tell you."

At the cruel words Anise shrank back; but a kind, firm hand was laid upon her shoulder, and Mr. Lennox's voice said:

"Anise, I want you a moment."

She turned and followed him, her face in shadow. At the desk he paused.

"Will you go on the boat-ride with us?" he asked.

"Oh, Mr. Lennox," the girl's voice rang out full of pain; "you heard them — I cannot."

"I heard them, Anise; but had sent the invitation this morning, so that need not distress you. You will find the note awaiting you at home."

"You will go, won't you?"

"But Sybil?"

"She will be provided with an escort, you may be sure. Your answer, Evangeline?"

"I should like to go if —"

"If what?" smilingly.

"If you are sure you want me."

"I am very sure." And so it was decided. Thursday morn-

ing dawned clear and bright. As Anise parted her curtains and let a flood of sunshine in, she clasped her hands for joy. Such a day as she would have. The sweet hours in the woods, the row, and the dancing. This latter, Anise did not care for; not she thought, out in the sacred silence of the woods; but she would wander off from that. She would hear the birds sing and the insects hum all day — she would.

While she was dreaming, a neat little fellow in naval uniform called and took Sybil; before she could resume her dreams, Mr. Lennox himself was waiting for her. She opened the door half-shyly; but he, not at all shy, came in, smiled upon her, and bade her to be ready in a moment.

Down the Dee. Was there ever so silver-bright a stream; such velvet, mossy banks; such graceful drooping alders and willows? Was there ever so sweet a day, so blue a sky, or in all the bright world, so light a heart as Anise's.

She thought not; and Percy Lennox, noting the flushed face and sparkling eyes, saw neither sky nor stream, bank nor willows, for the sunshine and the beauty he noted there. Down the Dee for two hours, until the sunshine was very warm, and the shade along the bank invited them. Then they moored their little barks, and the happy party scattered among the trees. First a lunch, and then the dancing. Anise shyly took herself to the woodland. The silent happy influence, and the singing birds and flowers lured her onward, and she walked on until she lost sight and sound of the merry throng. Accustomed to loneliness, after the happiness of the row, it was most grateful to her; but as the shadows began to lengthen, she turned to retrace her steps. Turned, but alas! she had gone too far. On all sides the green walk inclosed her.

Beyond their cruel gates she could not go. Almost hopelessly the poor child wandered about until darkness came on. Then she was suddenly stricken with the terror and fear of darkness. She cried aloud, and started at the hollow echo of her own voice. She ran until she was weary, and then retraced her steps. Every leaf, softly dropping, frightened her. The flutter of a bird's wing, the cry of an insect, or the bending of the grasses, set her timid heart pulsating. She grew cold and tired, and finally knelt softly upon the leaves and prayed. That prayer

was to Anise friend and guard. She lay down quietly, and, with her hands still folded upon her breast, fell asleep.

"Blow the horn, Benedict," said Mr. Lennox, as the sun began to drop behind the hill.

"That will bring the folks together, and Miss Gray among them, I hope. I'm afraid she's wandered off, for I have not been able to find her since noon."

Benedict took the horn and sent a blast through the woods. Another, and another; and soon all the gay party were gathered together upon the shore. All but Anise. Where was she? None had seen her.

"I dare say she's gone home," said Sybil, lightly. "She's so odd. Let's follow her example."

Lennox looked sternly at the girl; then took the horn, and blew it sharply, until echo after echo replied. Only echo, not Anise.

"We will put the ladies in two of the skiffs," said Lennox, under his breath, "and eight of you gentlemen can take charge of them. The rest will stay and search the woods."

Rapidly and silently the boats were filled, manned, and started, then Percy separated the remaining gentlemen into couples, and, with torches made from pine-knots, they began to scour the woods. Though frightened birds and startled squirrels fled from the sound of the horn and shouting and the blaze of the light, Anise never replied. Heavy-hearted, and weary of foot, the searchers pursued their search. Percy Lennox and Benedict had started together, but had separated to take two different paths. Silently, hopelessly almost, Percy held his torch aloft, and sought for the lost girl. Suddenly the light shone upon a fair face, upon two clasped hands, and a tear lying on a pale cheek. With an involuntary reverence, Percy stooped, knelt, and laid his hand upon hers.

"Evangeline, my sweet Evangeline!" Anise opened her eyes, and smiled, still half asleep. Then as she began to comprehend surroundings beyond the face which bent above her, she rose quickly.

"Where am I? Oh, I remember, I am so happy to be found. The silence and the darkness frightened me."

"And have I found you, sweet Evangeline — and having

found you, may I keep you?" How that question would have been answered I cannot say; for just then the blast of the horn, the shouting, and the footsteps of the searchers smote their ears, and Percy had the presence of mind to call aloud and soon the happy word "Found! Found!" was ringing joyfully through the woods.

Such a happy, happy party was that which embarked at midnight on the rippling Dee. There was on Percy's face a light which did not come from the moonlight — there was in Anise's heart a "peace that passeth understanding" as she sat, hand in Percy's, and listened to the quick, steady stroke of the oars in the river.

"I think," he said, bending to her, "that I found to-day what I had not lost — and yet was lost. Poor little child! how could you sleep so peacefully in the dark woods?"

"I thought I would be cared for," she replied, simply; "and my heart had been so happy all day, that before I knew it, I was asleep."

"My sweet Evangeline!"

"At least it was mysterious," said Sybil Ward, the following day, as the school girls were talking over the picnic, "her getting off by herself, and making such a fuss. It was ridiculous, to say the least of it." But Anise smiled tenderly to herself, and the cruel words passed unheeded; for in her heart of hearts one loving name shut out all harsher ones. She was to one "Evangeline"; and she remembered with a happy tremor that picnic "down the Dee."

For the *New York Mercury*. March 9, 1867.

ONLY WAIT, SUSIE!

"Only wait, Susie! I'll come back soon," cried the boy to his little playmate, as he started on a brisk run, flying his kite. And the child replied to him, raising her sweet voice that it might reach him as he ran:

"I'll wait, Charley, but don't stay too long."

The gentleman, passing by, started suddenly at the words, and

yet he was not one to attach undue importance to children's nonsense.

Mr. Charles Millard, at thirty, was an old soldier of the world, and had long ago had all the romance worked out of him, or thought he had. He stopped now, looked at the boy as he ran gayly and happily down the street, at the girl standing patiently waiting for him, yet following him with a triumphant, happy smile — the kite was so high — looked at them, turned and sighed.

"Our very words," he muttered, as he walked on. "Our very words!"

They haunted him. He turned to look at the speakers. The boy was already out of sight; but the girl, true to her promise and hope, stood where he had left her, shading her eyes from the slant rays of the setting sun with one little hand — stood patiently, hopefully watching and waiting.

"Poor child!" said Millard, under his breath. "Poor, pretty, patient child!"

That evening, nothing satisfied Millard. He who was so easily satisfied, that he was the delight of his landlady's heart. He had been hungry, but he ate nothing; he had prepared the daily and weekly papers for perusal, yet he had read none of them, but lounging back in his easy-chair, gazing out in the star-lit summer night, he dreamed — and these were the dreams he dreamed.

In the shadow and fragrance of the locust-tree he saw an old farmhouse. How well he remembered it! The dear old homely house, the spring at the foot of the hill, the little path leading thereto, and that other little path, worn only by childish feet, running like a silver thread over the hills, through the valley where the wild plums blushed and fell, over another hill across the little brook (where he had laid three flat stones that she might not wet her feet), and so to Susie's house.

Scene after scene of his childhood came up now and then, and the dreamer sighed. He saw himself, a tall, slender boy, standing beneath those same old plum trees, and Susie was by his side; Susie, no longer a child, but a fair young girl, with large blue eyes, full of loving kindness, and a crimson little mouth, all aquiver with emotion. He saw again the soft brown

curling tresses, the dear clasping hands, and heard again her low tones, so low that the rippling of the brook almost drowned them.

"Only wait, Susie! I'll come back soon!" he said, putting her hair from her brow tenderly; and she had made answer, smiling hopefully through her tears:

"I'll wait, Charley, but don't stay too long!"

And that was ten years since. Ten years! and she had asked him to stay not too long. Ten years, and he had said "I'll come back soon!"

Was Susie waiting?

"No, no," cried Charley, "not that, not that! Oh, she must have forgotten!"

But the saintly face, rising softly in his memory, said: "It's not the face of one who forgets." Father, mother, sisters, and brothers, all rose to condemn him.

"Oh, I wonder," he thought, "if mother is so delicate as she was? The hair must be gray now; and father, does he stoop any more? His face cannot be so clear by this time. I wonder if Kate has lost her pride by this time? What a glorious woman Kate will make! She was such a regal little thing! Will make? She must be a woman now! That was ten years ago. George and Henry are men now, and little Clarence is at least fifteen. And Susie! Oh, Susie! Susie! are you waiting for me yet, my darling?"

Silently the tears welled up to his eyes, and fell unchecked; for an angel had stirred the waters of his soul, and he was healed.

"I will go to see them," he said, softly. "I will ask them to forgive me — will tell them that the cares of this world choked the good seed; I will go to them and find rest; but Susie may be married by this time. Oh, my darling, you are deservedly lost!"

The strong man wept; but as he wept, the picture of the little child standing on the curbing rose to comfort him.

"This must be the hand of God," said he. "They need me at home. Susie may be waiting for me, as the little Susie I saw to-night was waiting. I have been flying my kite these many years. Only wait, Susie, and I'll come back!"

Then he thought upon the injustice which had driven him

from home, how patient he had tried to be, how he had tried to like a farmer's life, and how his father had refused to let him go. At twenty-one he went, and only Susie knew that he was going; only Susie bade him not stay long. He had taken the horses to water, and little Clarence with him. He had watched them drink from the moss-covered trough, and put his arms about their necks like a child. Then he kissed little Clarence, and folded him in his arms, until the pretty child curved his lips in pain; kissed him for father, mother, and the children; and then he tied a little note in among his curls for his mother, and set the child upon the back of gentle old Bess. She led the way home; and Charley, through his tears, watched father and mother at the window smiling at the royal little rider; saw Kate, with her bright hair flying, run out to him, and George and Henry smiling from the doorway; saw them all so happy and so loving, and then turned with a full heart from father, mother, and home. That night there was sorrow in the old home. Little Clarence crying for a lost curl, and a mother for a lost son. Charley was a dear boy at home, a tender, genial, loving, playful boy; but once having turned his back upon it, it was not his nature to regret or turn back. He shut from even his own thoughts all memory of home, and went boldly out to work; and as he worked, the dear old home-scenes grew fainter, and he turned to the world for the joy that he had been wont to find in the home-circle.

He wrote one letter home after he left, and it had been returned unopened, and re-directed in his father's firm, stiff hand. He wrote to Susie, but in reply came a tremulous note from her, blotted with tears, but saying that her father would not have her correspond with a boy who had disobeyed his parents, and ending with: "But I may love you all the same, Charley; and you will soon come back a great and noble man. How very happy we shall be then! Farewell, dear; I shall pray for you nightly. Don't stay long."

And so the last link which bound him to his home was severed. What wonder if the boy's heart grew cold and bitter! What wonder if the cares of this world sprang up and choked the good seed. Only choked it, for a mother's tears and prayers must bring forth fruit. He prospered, and riches came to him.

From him their wings seemed clipped. His hand was open to the poor. His heart only seemed closed.

Many years ago, he put Susie's one letter and the shining curl which he had severed from Clarence's baby head at the moss-grown trough, away together, and as time passed he recurred to them less often — remembered them more as a sweet vision than as a reality — until upon this evening, when the little strange children brought up to his memory the buried past, reproved him for his long delay, and urged his return to his father.

Sunset in the country. Above the whispering trees, the clouds of royal splendor are lavishly piled, and a clear, summer evening is reluctantly approaching — softening and melting the brighter tints of the dying day. Without, the soft, sweet hum of insect-life, the sleepy chirping of birds, the musical tinkle of bells as straying cattle turn homewards, the good-night crowing of the barn-yard fowls, and the thousand happy notes of the gay, hoarse katy-dids and grasshoppers; within, the low whispered tones and soft steps, the silence and solemnity that tell of the presence of death.

A tender mother lies upon her pillows, and watches the sunset as it flushes the Western sky. An old man, with light, thin hair, and lines of care upon his face, holds one thin hand in both his, caressing it gently from time to time. A pale, sweet-faced woman, with an inexplicable sadness upon her face, moves softly about. One son bends tenderly over his mother, one only son, of all her children, who were wont to play about her feet, and share equally her dear caresses — this one only is now near her to receive her last farewell.

"Run to the gate, Susie," she says, faintly, to the sweet-faced girl. "You may see him coming."

The girl obeyed; but made answer, soothingly:

"Not yet, mother; he'll be here after awhile."

"I know it," said the mother. "He'll never let his mother die without coming. He was always a loving, tender boy. There, Susie, I heard his step upon the porch."

"No, mother, it was but the branch of the tree against the house."

"Perhaps," said she wearily, "he will be here soon, for I am .

going fast. Lemuel, father, you must be kind to him for my sake. If he doesn't get here until I am dead, remember to love him. He was our first-born, and we were very proud of him. You know, father, we might have been more gentle to the lad."

The old man groaned aloud.

"Henry, my dear son!" and the mother's voice cadenced the words tenderly. "You have been my joy and pride all your life. Be good to Susie and your old father. There, I heard Charley's step upon the gravel. Just in time — just in time. Henry, open the door for our lost one, who has come back."

Have the dying quickened senses? As they near death, when the veil of the mortal is rent in twain, are not their perceptions brighter and keener than of old? I think so.

No ear save the waiting mother's heard that step; and yet, when Henry opened the door, a man, tall and bearded, came in. He walked directly to his mother's bedside, and kneeling, cast his arms about her.

"My mother! Oh, my mother! forgive your son!"

"My son! my son! Oh, my darling son!"

Silently, Susie stole from the room. Her heart was full. He had come. He had remembered them at last, and now she had no impatience for the greeting. That, she felt, was his dying mother's.

"How brave you are grown, and how handsome, my Charley!" said his mother, holding him from her. "Father, have you no word to welcome your son?"

"Father!" and Charley's voice trembled. "Will you forgive me?"

"Forgive you! Oh, my boy, my boy, forgive your old father! As we draw nearer to death, we see things clearer, my son. I have mourned my harshness since — since —" And the old man choked, "since we laid our pretty Kate away."

Brother Henry and Charley threw their arms about his neck, and kissed him in the old boyish way.

"You, and George, and little Clarence, and I, will have the old times again. Where are they? And what did father say of little Kate? Come here, Charley!"

Fainter and fainter grew the mother's voice.

"Come here, and I will tell you. Nerve your heart, my son! George, and little Clarence, and Kate will all meet me in Heaven. It was not many months after you left that Clarence fell sick; and oh, Charley, the curl you took that summer-evening is all that is left of our pretty baby. Then Kate, our one ewe lamb, went next — three years ago. She left her love for you, and some gifts. George fell in the Battle of the Wilderness, ready to die; and now, my darling, you and Henry, are all that we have left. And Susie — father, where is Susie? — call her. Oh, I am so happy!"

A single quick-drawn sigh — a loosening of the hand that lay in "father's" — a brightening of the smile that fell upon her two boys, and the mother had gone to join the dear ones in the better land.

Weeks passed before the sunshine seemed bright again for Charley. Poor, repentant, mourning man! The graves of little Clarence and Kate, daisy-covered, upbraided him. The memory of George, asleep on the battlefield, and the grief-worn face of his old father, reproached him.

The dear mother laid away had softened that reproach with her dying smile; and yet "had he stayed," and Charley shuddered — "Might not that dear mother have lived longer?"

These thoughts made Charley tender and gentle to the childish old man, who clung to him with re-awakened love, and very grateful to Henry now a thriving farmer, who had been a good son.

There was one who had not welcomed him in words; only by the fleeting brightness of eye and tremulous little hand, had he been greeted; and he asked for no more, not until she had gone back to her own home again, and the sun had risen and set many times above his mother's grave.

Then, one evening — such an evening as that on which she had died — when Susie had run over with some dainty for the old man's tea, as she often did, Millard waited until she had kissed him good-by, and replied to his impatience at her going, that she would soon return, and then said:

"Come, Susie, I want to talk to you."

Susie turned silently in the path he led — that very little path over the hill and down the valley, until they reached the clump of plum-trees.

Millard may have wanted to talk to her; but, strange enough, he spoke no word until they stood once more in the shadow of the trees. Then he turned toward her, and said, with a smile in his eyes that was not born of mirth:

"Susie, I've come back again!"

And Susie, lifting her large, sad eyes, full now of a quaint happiness, only said:

"I waited for you, Charley; but oh, you stayed so long!"

For the *New York Mercury*. Saturday, April 6, 1867.

THE PILLAR OF CLOUD

"Well, I won't!"

"Pshaw, Lettie; you will, darling."

"No, I won't!"

Stanley Bury bent his brows slightly.

"But, Lettie —"

"I won't hear another word, Stanley; so that's the end of it." Lettie's bright eyes flashed a little, and her red lips curled. "I suppose," she continued, twirling the heavy ring upon her left hand; "that it's much worse in me to go with him than it is for you to take Kate Singleton to the dance."

"She was my sister's guest," replied Stanley; "and I could do no less. Now, Lettie, don't let's quarrel over this. Tell me that you will not go."

Lettie looked silently at the sweet, blue sky — at the silver thread of road winding beside the pleasant river, and the temptation was too great for her to resist.

"No, Stanley, I'll go," she said, decidedly; "and it won't do me any hurt."

"Very well, Miss Lee."

Tears sprang to naughty Lettie's eyes at his tone; but she answered saucily enough:

"Yes, Mr. Burt, very well indeed."

"You cannot play with me in this, Lettie."

"I have no desire, sir, having playthings infinitely more amusing."

"Very well; you will go then?"

"Of course."

Stanley Burt touched his hat slightly, and walked down the gravel-walk, opened the gate, and pausing one moment, irresolutely he called Lettie, in a voice that was most gentle. She went to him at once, and cast down her eyes, that he might not see the tears.

"I was harsh just now, Lettie. Forgive me, dear; but I know the character of the man so well, that I found I could not bear to have my pure darling with him for one moment. At all events — he shall not make us quarrel — shall he, dear?"

Lettie placed her hand on Stanley's shoulders, and lifted herself up on her tiptoes, so bringing her childish face level with his.

"You're the best man in the world, Stanley, and I'm the worst girl. I'll not go this afternoon, dear; indeed I won't. You won't mind my having been so cross, will you? but indeed I did want a ride this lovely afternoon."

"That's my own darling." Stanley kissed his wilful "ladye" with unusual fondness, and walked away feeling very light of heart.

"Poor child," he said to himself; "she wants a ride, and she shall have one. I'll make her happy to-day. It's been a long time since I've given myself a holiday, and I don't wonder the darling thinks I'm sober and glum. I'll go this afternoon."

True to his determination, Stanley Burt hired an elegant little turnout in the afternoon, and drove round to Lettie's, fancying her look of delighted surprise when she saw him; but he was doomed to disappointment. No glad face flashed upon him from the window, no light step ran to greet him; only the pompous servant said:

"They are all out, sir."

"Miss Lettie, too?"

"Yes, sir; Miss Lettie went about an hour ago, out riding, sir."

Stanley bit his lips. Had she gone then? Perhaps it was a mistake.

"Did she go alone?"

"No," the servant said; "she went with a gentleman."

Silently Stanley turned from the house, and entered his carriage. The sunshine had somehow lost its brightness, the soft spring air its freshness, and he snapped his whip maliciously at a full-throated blue-bird, which sat upon a twig, singing.

"Hallo, old fellow," called a chum, as he passed; "you're too late to-day. I saw your 'faire ladye' some time ago, with a dark-eyed Apollo, twice as handsome as you."

It was he, then. Stanley, who was not handsome, envied Wilson Burt his beauty. How drearily the day passed. The slow hours which had promised so much brightness, were very dark. Stanley, at his desk, worried and chafed, longing for the evening, when he might see Lettie, and know why she had gone; for his loving heart had many excuses which it urged.

Wilson was his cousin, a handsome, fascinating man, enough to turn the head of any girl; but Stanley knew him to be utterly unprincipled, and therefore was so peremptory in his command to his lady-love.

"If she went," said Stanley, to himself; "it was Wilson's fault. I can hardly blame her, she's such a child."

While he yet thought, the door opened, and Wilson came in. He was of a truth very handsome, slender, graceful, with an oriental luxuriance of beard and hair, large, soft, dark eyes, and full, red lips, which parted in a bright almost vivid smile when he spoke.

"At your desk yet, you slow fellow. What do you mean by letting other fellows run away with that bright little girl of yours. I've had a glorious ride. By Jove! you should have seen her eyes kindle when the sunset was reflected in the water. I never took my eyes from her face. It was worth a thousand sunsets. By-the-way Stan, you ought to know better than to make a girl swear that she won't do anything, for then she's sure to do it."

Stanley put on his hat, drew on his gloves, and with scarcely so much as a nod said: "My tea-hour," and vanished, leaving Wilson somewhat amazed.

"Cool, upon my word," said the latter; "but I've made him happy for an hour at least; shouldn't wonder if I broke it all off, they're both so proud. Ah, well, there's the seed planted. We'll wait for the fruit."

While Stanley Burt paced up and down the street, smoking innumerable cigars, Lettie Lee waited for his coming, her happy little face in a quiver of impatience.

"I'm so glad I didn't go with Wilson, mamma," she said, laughing; "for you see I had my ride all the same, and did good, too. Then Dr. Holmes is so sedate and grave, and altogether — with that long nose, poor fellow! — so unprepossessing that Stanley can't object. I wonder what does keep him. He ought to have been here long ago."

Ought to have been, but wasn't, not that night — nor the next — nor any other night for weeks. How slowly they dragged along for Lettie, in her home, grieving over Stanley's absence; to Stanley, in his counting-room, brooding over Lettie's falsity, and Wilson Burt was everywhere. He told stories of Lettie's gayety to Stanley, and told Lettie queer tales of Stanley's flirting; and so it came about that Wilson took Stanley's place among Lettie's friends, and was most kind and devoted. So it came about that Lettie's face lost something of its roundness, and her laugh rang less clearly than of old, and Stanley's brow bent a little more severely than was its wont. They never met now. Why should they? Wilson Burt bore news of each to each, and the pillar of cloud was between them. The sweet spring deepened into summer and brightened into autumn, and still these foolish lovers went their separate ways with aching hearts and smiling lips. It was whispered now that Wilson Burt and Lettie Lee would make a match.

"Such a handsome couple!" said Dame Rumor; "much better for her than Stanley."

I don't think these stories reached Lettie, but they certainly did not add to Stanley's happiness. He felt his peace slipping from him, but had she not been false? Would he, could he forget that promise sealed with so loving a kiss, and broken before the hour was gone? These questions Stanley answered — not verbally, but by staying sullenly and miserably in his own room.

It was a clear, cloudless, moonlight night — such a night as we Northerners seldom enjoy. There was a faint breeze stirring in the lower part of the city, but above the river it was sultry and close. Stanley Burt, leaving his office, strolled

listlessly down to the riverside. The wharf was crowded as usual with hackmen and draymen. Not at any time a very enticing neighborhood; to-night it was worse than usual, for an organ-grinder had succeeded in collecting quite a crowd of men and boys, to whom he ground out a miserable burlesque of "Yankee Doodle," receiving as compensation the pennies and scrip donated by an appreciative audience. Looking beyond these, Stanley saw a small ferry-boat, gay with happy faces just slipping out from among the other ferries for a downward moonlight trip. Acting from impulse, rather than inclination, Stanley pushed his way through the crowd and stepped on deck.

"It's chartered, sir," said a man standing nearby. "Captain Hall, shall the gentleman stay?"

Captain Hall, an acquaintance of Stanley's, turned at this, shook hands cordially with him, and urged his remaining.

"Go up on deck, Mr. Burt, you'll find some old friends there."

Stanley obeyed, not that he wanted particularly to see old friends, but that the steam and baggage and sailors made the lower deck uncomfortable. He went up the winding stairs and found the little cabin well filled with happy couples. These he passed and went upon the guards. There, too, were several couples sitting, watching the moonlight upon the water, and talking in undertones. Selecting a silent corner, where a vacant stool lured him, he sat down and leaned over the railing. The cool air fanned his brow, and the silver river flowed past him delightfully. At all times susceptible to outer and pleasanter influences, Stanley's rather heavy heart grew lighter to-night than it had been since he said good-by to Lettie at the gate. He was thinking of her and that time, when a familiar voice smote his ear, a low, sweet voice that could belong to no one else but Wilson Burt.

"I saw Stan," he was saying, "as I came past the office. He was on his way to his fair fiancée, I suppose. He certainly looked happy enough. By the way, Miss Lettie, isn't it singular that a man like him should degenerate into a flirt?"

Bending forward, Stanley heard the answer, and every low tone made his heart thrill.

"He can never degenerate into a flirt, Mr. Burt. I know him better. He has known Miss Singleton for a long time; and if he has learned to love her, I cannot see the wrong."

"But the deuce of it is, Miss Lettie, that he should change so. Now I —"

"Mr. Burt," and Lettie's voice was full of unexpressed pain, "please don't. Look how the moonlight quivers on the water there. Is not that beautiful? There is a milky wave below as well as above. I wonder if our earth is not a moon to some other earth, as this is to us, and if its light is not even now glimmering upon some distant river?"

"They are dancing in the cabin, Miss Lettie. You are engaged for this dance, I think?"

"I will go in," said Lettie, rising at once; and as she went Stanley bent his head lower yet on the railing until she passed. He had not thought that Wilson Burt would repeat a rumor that he knew to be false. Once again, and Stanley drew a deep breath, he would speak to Lettie Lee, and let her know the truth.

"It might be,"—how his heart beat at that—"that she could explain her broken promise. He would try."

Elbowing his way through the small, crowded door, Stanley found himself in the little cabin where the mysteries of "right and left" were being gone through by three or four happy sets, to the music of the band.

Lettie was dancing with Wilson Burt, and by the unctuous light of the lamps, Stanley thought she was pale. Perhaps she was, but she was spirited, save now and then — how quickly the eyes of love detected it — a little absent-minded. Through the long quadrille — and it was very long to Stanley — he, standing in the shadow, watched her; then, as she moved away on Wilson's arm, he advanced.

Not now; he could not speak now, yet there were already three or four gentlemen rushing frantically toward her with cards in their hands. He must, if possible, see her now.

"Miss Lee," her name trembled slightly upon his lips as he spoke, "I wish you would promenade with me."

Lettie started, looked into his face, and paled, visibly.

Before she could reply, Wilson had answered for her: "How in the world did you get here, Stan? You can't have Miss Lee for a long time. She dances with me, the polka."

"Miss Lettie will answer for herself," replied Stanley, biting his lips. "Will you come?"

Who could resist that pleading, almost caressing tone? Not

Lettie, certainly, when her foolish little heart was all a flutter. She took his arm at once, saying apologetically to Wilson, "For a little while, you'll excuse me, won't you?"

They walked upon the guards. The place was deserted for the cabin, but the bright moonlight and the soft evening air wooed them to remain.

"I have something to say to you," Stanley began, and paused. He had thought it very easy to say, but now the words were wanting, yet with the old, careful kindness he drew her shawl closer.

"Well?" Lettie's voice was inquiring.

"I want to tell you," recommenced Stanley, "that accidentally I overheard Mr. Burt telling you of my engagement to Miss Leighton. Miss Leighton is engaged to my brother."

"And you are not?" Lettie hesitated.

With a half-smile, Stanley answered. "No, I am not — and you — have you nothing to say to me?"

Lettie's face flushed painfully. "Nothing," she replied.

"Then I was foolish to speak."

"Mr. Burt," and Lettie's voice sank still lower than its usual semi-tone, "I do not know whether I ought to say this, but I will now since you have spoken. I do not know why you have acted so; nor why I, your betrothed wife, for many weeks have not seen you. This to me can mean but one thing. I accept the meaning." Lettie slipped the ring from her finger and laid it in his hand. "I only waited to see you for this. And now, Mr. Burt, take me to my partner."

Stanley could not know the bitter sinking of her brave little heart; but he was a just man, and could not be condemned unjustly.

"I will tell you why I have been so cold and so troubled. When you promised me you would not ride with Wilson, I believed you. In the afternoon I went to take you myself, and found that you were gone."

"With whom?"

"With Wilson, of course."

"How do you know?"

"Because as I was returning to my office, a friend said you had passed with a dark-eyed Apollo."

"Oh," Lettie laughed.

Stanley frowned, and then continued: "And in the evening, Wilson himself came in and bantered me about letting you go with him."

"Is that all?"

"Is it not enough? Dared I go when I felt that you had been false to your promise?"

"I am sorry," said Lettie, "that you had so little confidence in me. Had you come to me I could have told you the truth."

"Lettie, is not this true?"

"I went to ride," said Lettie steadily, "but not with your cousin. I refused him and told him the reason. I rode with Dr. Holmes, who may be an Apollo, but very few know it."

"Miss Lettie, a host of gentlemen sent me for you. Come, Stanley, you mustn't monopolize, you know," cried Wilson Burt, putting his handsome face out the door.

"Go in, Wilson, I will bring her presently," replied Stanley, hoarsely.

"Lettie, Lettie, have I indeed been wrong?"

"You have been wrong, Stanley. Doctor Holmes took me to see a poor patient of his. Why did you not trust me?"

"Why, indeed? Will you, Lettie — dare I ask that you will forgive me, for indeed it was not lack of love."

"It was a pillar of cloud," said Lettie, gravely. "Stanley, I will forgive you because I love you; but, darling, you must trust me."

Upon that second betrothal the moon smiled, and two happy hearts lifted up gratefully; for had not the pillar of cloud become a light to guide them on their way?

For the *New York Mercury*. Saturday, May 11, 1867.

TINY KROOK

"Tiny Krook! Tiny Krook! Oh, here you are, Richard wants you in the library," said her handsome cousin, Clara, to the little misshapen creature sitting on the music-stool, and weaving tender melodies to suit her fancy. At the

summons, Tiny raised her head quickly, revealing a girl's face, clear and unshadowed by any tint of rose, with large mournful gray eyes, and a tender tremulous mouth, the whole framed in by masses of dark waving hair, which fell, as she sat, almost to the floor. As she slid to the floor, she was no longer a beautiful child, but a poor little painful hunchback, with shoulders which should be plump, and slope softly away from that snowy neck, drawn and contorted beneath the pitying, shadowing dresses. She was, after all, but in nature as in name, a poor little tiny crook. She left the room now, moving with awkward consciousness of her deformity, beneath the somewhat scornful eyes of her cousin; but once in the twilight of the library, she closed the door with a deep sigh of relief, and lost all that awkwardness, running gayly as a happier child, toward the manly boy standing by the window. He met her half-way, lifted her in his arms, with a brotherly caress, and playfully set her in the deep window seat, so bringing her shining head nearly to the height of his, as he leaned with his elbow upon it.

"Clara said you wanted me, brother," said Tiny, in a voice suited to the tender sweetness of the mouth.

"So I did, Tiny, so I did," said the boy slowly, "but how to tell you what I must, I don't know."

"Is is bad news, Richard?" asked Tiny, under her breath.

"How old are you, Tiny?" was the irrelevant reply.

"Why, brother, you know I am just eighteen."

"Why yes, so you are; you are quite a little woman, little sister; you ought to be strong enough to bear a trial for your brother's sake."

Tiny put her little arms about his neck, and kissed him. "I am strong enough to bear anything for your sake, Richard — strong and happy."

"Dear little sister," he said softly, unfolding her clinging arms, "dear little sister."

"What is it, Richard? Do tell me."

"Well then, Tiny, listen; don't you remember the stories grandfather used to tell us long ago, of how he went to war, and fought for his country and freedom? Don't you know that he lost his arm at Bloody Creek, and his ear in storming a fort, you remember all that?"

"I remember," said Tiny, under her breath, "I remember. Go on."

"Well, Tiny, you know that I used to clench my fists, and say that if ever the time should come when I could fight for my country, I'd go; and Grandfather used to pat my head, and say 'Right, boy, right!' Don't you recollect?"

"I remember," said Tiny, with a quivering lip.

Richard turned now, and put his arms about her. "Little sister," he said softly, "be strong, now, be my brave little woman. That time has come. I must go and fight for my country."

Poor little Tiny, like a crushed lily, lay in his encircling arms. She did not faint, her agony was too great for that; but all the strength of her heart seemed gone, and she passively bore his tender kisses, only closing her eyes to shut in the crowding tears. "You know, darling," continued Richard, "that the people here and all over the South want to break up this government that Grandfather fought for, and I don't think he would be pleased if I didn't help to preserve it. So darling, because my country needs me, you must be brave, and let your brother go."

"Oh, Richard, what will become of me? what will become of me?" sighed the poor little creature, piteously.

"Why Tiny, you must stay here just as you are, and Aunt Clara will have you just as she always has. I must go, because it is right I should."

That was all that Tiny knew of the war. She had read none of the able arguments pro and con. She did not so much as know that there were such in existence, but Richard had pointed out to her the right way, and enforced his way by actions; so henceforth Tiny knew but one party for the right one, and her woman's heart shone through the child's face, as she said firmly: "I will be strong, brother, since it is right. Go, and God bless you, but — oh," and here the pitiable child broke through the heroic woman; "Oh, Richard — brother Richard, I shall be so lonely, so alone."

"So you will, dear, but you can write me long letters, and think of those I'll write to you; and I'll tell you all the fun we have in camp, and all that," said Richard, soothingly.

“When are you going, brother?”

“To-morrow, Tiny, or the day after; but it’s tea-time now, and I hear the bell; come, my little woman, my brave darling little sister, we’ll go to tea.”

Smiling, the better to deserve his praises, Tiny twined her arms about his neck, and put her face from him so that he might not see that she was smiling through tears. And so the brother and sister went down to tea, both hearts heavy at the thoughts of a speedy parting.

He was gone. The last kiss was given. The last sound of his footsteps had died away, and poor little Tiny knew that her brother was forever gone from her. She could not help that feeling. “Forever,” she repeated over and over again, and her foreboding heart re-echoed “Forever, forever!”

“He will come again, Tiny,” they all said, pitying the desolate whiteness of her face. “He will soon be home, child. Don’t grieve so.”

But Tiny was not to be comforted. She could only smile — a more miserable smile than any sigh — and sadly shake her head.

Weeks passed. Tiny’s uncle declared himself in favor of “State sovereignty,” and accepted a commission as Captain of a Home Guard. From that time his sympathies were apart from Richard, and Tiny’s loving heart was often pained by his unkind allusion to her brave young brother; but she bore it all silently, for had she not promised Richard to be strong? and more than that began to think how best she could serve him. Her weak little fingers began busying themselves knitting socks for the soldiers; and she watched the papers with a feverish eagerness, if perhaps her brother’s company might be mentioned.

So a year passed, and January — stinging, cold, frosty, January came. Richard had not once been home since his going, and Tiny’s uncle had joined the Confederate forces in the field, and was now encamped about two miles from home. He came home quite frequently, bringing officers with him; for Clara’s beauty in itself was a temptation to the chivalry, and that, with the good fare generally to be found at Captain Krook’s, was irresistible. On one evening — it was the first part of Jan-

uary — Captain Krook brought home a party of eight gentlemen to dinner, among them one whom Tiny knew to be considered as a most excellent spy, for her ears had not been deaf during his frequent calls at their house. She knew, too, that Clara was not indifferent to him, and had grown to think, without much reason, but from an intuitive knowledge of her cousin's character, that Clara had on more than one occasion obtained for him important news from the Federal officers. This man, James Clay by name, Tiny resolved to watch. She was so childlike and so apparently indifferent to their conversation that no reserve was considered necessary in her presence. Even her uncle, so little did he understand her, believed her ideas regarding the two armies vague and undefined. It was just dusk when the party sat down to dinner, and it was quite dark when the ladies left the dining room and wines were brought in. Tiny, as usual, free to do as she liked, left the room with the ladies, but presently returning, sat down softly, under the shadows of the window-curtains. If any of the guests observed her enter, they soon forgot the fact, and in her silent, shadowed nook the little spy cat, apparently reading, really listening for all the news that might accidentally fall from unguarded lips.

"The Feds'll find they reckoned without their host," said her uncle laughing; "when our forces take possession of the city they'll be surprised enough."

"We're sure to do it," said James Clay. "I made a good haul to-day myself; and that reminds me I must reach camp to-night, and deliver up my papers."

"How's that, Clay?" asked the party, in a breath.

Clay cautiously lowered his voice.

"I met a fellow," he said smiling, "who looked ragged enough, and gray enough to be one of our privates, but the chap didn't exactly strike me as belonging to the chivalry, so I ordered him to halt. I was well mounted, but quite alone; instead of his obeying me, he put spurs to his horse and sent back a defiant shout. I rode after him, and I tell you Black Bess flew like a bird, but the rascal was ahead of me, for he flew faster than any bird; so when I found that he was going to give me the slip, I sent a bullet after him. That stopped his horse, I grant you;

and as I came closer, I sent another, which stopped him. He fell from his staggering horse with a groan. I hadn't meant to kill him, but he was dying fast enough when I reached him. Well, I found he had a Fed's uniform under his disguise, and I found some sealed papers in his belt, which must go to my Colonel in the morning, bright and early."

"Hadn't they better go to-night?" asked Captain Krook, anxiously. "If they are important I had best send them at once."

Clay glanced through the window into the darkness without, listened to the sleet as it broke against the window-panes, shuddered, and said:

"Important enough for me to keep in my own hands, but I'll not start till daylight. This blasted sleet is too much for a fellow's nerves. To-morrow 'll do, I fancy."

"I'll carry the papers to-night," volunteered a young aspirant for martial glory, rejoicing in the name of John.

"Not a bit of it," yawned Clay. "I'll make my pillow of them to-night, and Bess'll take me in the morning. The Feds aren't eight miles from here, and I might fall in their hands in the darkness. No, no, we'll wait."

Softly the little creature buried in the shadow of the window-curtains slipped from her concealment, and unobserved, passed out the side door. She went at once to the drawing-room, where her Aunt and Clara were awaiting the appearance of the gentlemen.

"Aunt," said Tiny, "do you know where the bottle of chloroform is? my head isn't right to-night."

"In the side-cupboard, child, but be careful how you use it, as it is very strong."

"I will," said Tiny; "I'll use it just as it should be, Aunt Clara."

The storm forbade the gentlemen from returning to camp until morning. Accordingly they had a gay time in the parlors, and it was not until nearly midnight that Tiny heard her uncle say lightly:

"I guess you'd best go to bed, friends, if we're to be up at daybreak to-morrow. Clay, in consideration of — you know what, I'll give you the east room. It's a capitally safe place."

Then Tiny slipped out the room with her phial of chloro-

form, and went softly to her own. She knew that every room in the house had duplicate keys. She knew, too, where the duplicates were. That to the east room was already in her pocket. She had a duty to perform, and now was no time to hesitate.

"Tiny," she said to herself, over and over again; "be a brave girl, and save your country that Richard's fighting for. You must take the papers to camp to-night, if it is dark and stormy."

It seemed to her countless ages before she heard Clay retire to his room. Then it was a long time before the house grew still. At last she ventured. Her key slid noiselessly and easily into the lock. The door was open. Clay's hard breathing told her that he was yet undisturbed. The child put her hand on to her heart to still its terrified beating. A moment more, and the fumes of chloroform were rising in his nostrils. His hard breathing gradually subsided into gentle sighs, and then he scarce seemed to breathe at all. Tiny knew that he would not awaken for some hours. With a still movement she ran her hand beneath his pillow. Joy! The package was in her hand. So far she was safe. Holding her precious papers in her bosom as she went, she swiftly passed out the room, not pausing to lock the door again, and ran down stairs. There she paused to wrap her little form in a thick coat, and to tie her curls under a hood. This done, she opened the door. It creaked on its hinges, and she almost shrieked from terror, lest some one should hear her. But there was no sound. Perfect quiet reigned. Tiny passed out and closed the door; then ran with a timorous, beating heart to the stables.

As she knew beforehand the horses were standing in their stalls, saddled for instant use; and Jack, the boy, who was supposed to guard them, was not to be seen — preferring, most probably, the warmth of the cabin to the chill of the stable. Tiny could ride like a monkey. Her small, misshapen body seemed made for just such exercise; and Richard had spared no pains to perfect her in the exercise, since she was fond of it.

Perfectly fearless now, she led out the Black Bess belonging to Mr. Clay and climbing on the block, mounted him. A word, a touch, and he flew down the lane, out into the broad road, and forward. Cold and chill might fall the sleet; bitter and

cold might be the night, but the heroic little creature thought not of it. Faster and faster she urged her good steed. Faster yet, on, on, until his ringing hoofs struck fire from the way-side stones. Still on, for work must be done, and she might be followed. The driving sleet hung about her, but she cared not. Still her clear voice chirruped encouragement to her horse. Through the thick darkness he kept to the road, and she clung blindly to the bridle.

"Halt! and give the countersign."

Black Bess reared suddenly as a strong hand grasped him by the bit, and Tiny, breathless from hard riding, smiled to know that her task was finished.

"What the deuce is it, anyhow? questioned the soldier. "Can't you speak?"

"I want to see the General," gasped Tiny. "I have important news for him."

"A girl! And by George! no bigger than my thumb!" ejaculated the man, throwing the light from a lantern on Tiny's face.

"Why, child, you can't see the General. How do I know but what you're a Reb in disguise?"

"Oh, sir, I'm not," said the child, earnestly; "I'm Richard Krook's little sister, and he's in camp here."

"Ha! I wonder if that's so. I'll trust you, anyhow, though you haven't any countersign."

The soldier lifted the slight form off the horse, but the exertion had been too much for her. As he placed her on the ground, she fell fainting. With true soldierly fashion, he carefully examined her dress and face, and then gave a low whistle. In a moment, seeming to spring from the darkness, half a dozen guards surrounded the child, and the soldier told the story as she had given it to him.

"Is Dick Krook on picket to-night?" he asked.

"Here," cried a voice in the background; and Richard pushed forward.

One glance at the still white face, and he had caught his little sister in his arms. No thought of the lookers-on, no thought of how she came there. His kisses were on her face, and she slowly opened her eyes to smile at him. Ay, happy even then to greet him.

"Tiny, darling, how came you here? What brought you?" Her lips motioned, but no words came.

"She says she has papers," explained the guard, "and wants to give them to the General."

"Where are they, little sister?"

She put her little hand on her bosom, and slowly drew out from the folds of her cloak the package.

Richard and two other guards being relieved at once, proceeded to the General's tent, deeming the papers of sufficient importance to be delivered at once, since that weak child had ridden so far through rain and sleet. Then he took her to his own tent; and mother could not have more tenderly cared for her child than did Richard that night for his little sister.

The following morning, Tiny was quite recovered from her weakness, and sat on a box by the fire, laughing at Richard's funny jokes, when a summons came for both to go to the General's tent.

Reassuring his bashful little sister, Richard led her there at once. The General met them kindly, and took the little hand of Tiny in his own.

"I wanted to thank you personally for your heroism, little one," he said, "and to tell you that you have saved me from a surprise and a defeat; since, had those papers reached the enemy's hands, I must have suffered both. Krook, you have reason to be proud of your sister. I hope that you may prove as brave a hero, as she did a heroine."

Richard led Tiny back to his tent, gladdening her loving little heart with his praises; and the child, taking advantage of his evident delight in having her near him, plead earnestly:

"Let me stay here always, Richard."

"Stay here, Tiny! Why, dear, you could never bear all the hardships of a camp-life. Aren't you happy at your aunt's?"

"Yes, but I want to stay here with you. I shall die if you don't keep me, Richard. I am so alone. See how thin I am getting."

She held up her little transparent hands; and as he took them in his own, he bent and kissed her.

"You shall stay, little sister; you shall stay," he said, at length, "and we will be as careful of you as we can."

From that time, Tiny was established as the daughter of the regiment; and many a brave man will remember the face of the little hunchback as it gleamed above him on the battle-field; many parched lips will remember their fervent blessings as her hand gave them drink. Her voice cheered the wounded and comforted the dying; her face shone like a star of hope upon the despairing, and her light feet were never too weary to run on willing errands. She never passed a soldier but he bowed and touched his cap, as though an angel passed him by, and she grew to bear the name of "Angel of the Camp." To those who lived about her, and noted her patience under discomforts and pain; her tender sympathy and never-ceasing ministrations, she was no longer deformed but glorified; and when the fatal fever stole her beautiful soul from its setting to shrine it in a holier casket, there was not a man in the regiment but wept her loss, not a heart but felt her absence, and not a voice, however unused to pray or bless, but breathed over her beautiful, still face a fervent "God bless the child." So lived and died "The Angel of the Camp"; so was the deformed transformed, and the little crooked-backed girl, with the calm, holy face, transfigured, leaving but the fragrance of her life to remind the men that she had lived, as faded roses whisper of departed springs.

For the *New York Mercury*. November 9, 1867.

Descriptions of "the Falls," though numerous as autumn leaves on the grass, have the peculiar merit of ever being interesting, if the writer (as in the present instant) brings sentiment and poetical thought to cover the baldness of topographical detail.

UNDER THE FALLS

I have been under the Falls. I suppose everybody has been the same; that is, everybody who has been there at all and has had the courage to don the outrageous garb necessary thereto, and dare the consequence: viz, a thorough wetting. I did. The day was glorious. In the morning a rapid rain-storm had passed over, washing the dust from the leaves, and freshening their green beauty; and then all the gates of Heaven were

opened, and the sudden glory of the sun transfigured the scene. Above us the blue sky, flecked with misty white clouds, sphered in an intensity of color that Italian skies could not surpass. From the museum windows I could see the mist rising from the Falls in a yellow glory. Then, listening to the ceaseless noise of the cataract, and looking at so glorious a scene, I forgot myself, until one of the maids in waiting touched me. "Will you put these on, Miss?" Put those on! She had in her hand a pair of number seven rubbers, or rather the fragments of a pair, for they were cut and torn by stones; on her arm she carried a loose yellow oilcloth sack, a pair of long blue hose, and such a bonnet — that bonnet haunts me yet. It was yellow, like the dress, made close to fit the face, with a long curtain, and pinned under the chin. It is a brave woman who will wear that garb. While I was dressing, a mother with her baby came in. The baby, a chubby little fellow of a year or thereabouts, utterly refused to know his mother in her new dress, and no wonder. The handsomest girl I know could not stand that test. My companion was, if possible, yet more disfigured. You know how a man looks in a bonnet. Fancy this one in a yellow, limpid hood, with the curtain pinned under his chin. While we mutually laughed — I at his appearance and (I am afraid, he at mine — we were assailed by an obliging photographer, who insisted upon taking us "natural as life." Taking us, indeed. It's well enough to be a fright for fifteen minutes to see the Falls, but the idea of being limned up so, and presented to a host of friends as we appeared at our worst, is preposterous. We declined the obliging photographer's offer, and called the guide. I wonder if he guides every one down there, and if so, why everybody don't rave about him. He is straight as an arrow, and wears his oilcloth suit as a king's robes, tall and black and stately, a guide fit only for Niagara. He strode on before us, and we, hand in hand, followed the tortuous path, like the Babes in the Wood, and were buried (that's a pun) under the mists. Half way down the gravelly path we found an artist sketching. I hope his picture will be a success. I don't think it will. Its tints were precisely those of my yellow bonnet and blue stockings. The scene from this point was grand. The white, ceaseless cataracts were linked together by a brilliant

bow, whose center touched the quiet river. Before us rose the rugged, rocky heights shadowing the water, and the golden mist poured like incense from the foaming chalice, into the clear air. Over all, like God's benediction, bent the blue, blue sky, and "God saw that it was good." We stood silently here for some time, and the guide as silently waited, with a far away look in his eyes that saw neither flood nor sky. Then we took up the line of march singly now, for the path was narrow, and proceeded. Here we met a party of twelve returning, rosy, dripping, laughing, and, in their suits, merrily frightful. Let no devotee to carmine, rouge, or enamel, venture here. She will be all washed out in ten minutes, for these mists are very penetrating. Passing this party who had the lilies and the roses blown by cool fresh water in their faces, we carefully passed on, down more steps, and then "beneath the shadow of a great rock." Now, indeed, were we under the falls. The breeze from the river blew the mist in our faces, and the great flood fell ceaselessly, washing us in beneath one rock from all other sights and sounds. "Can't we go farther?" I asked the guide, who stopped here and turned. For reply, with a faint smile, he led us forward. Swifter and colder came the mist in our faces, until we stood so heavily coated that we could see nothing. "No farther, Miss," said the guide. "Where does the water come from?" asked my companion, looking forward with a laudable curiosity, which was instantly dampened by a stream of water striking his head and trickling coolingly down his back. I suppose he was satisfied as he did not look up again until we had passed the falls in the distance. When we emerged from the vaporous darkness, for it was kind of a gray darkness (if that is admissible), the scene was brighter for our partial blindness. For a long time we stood enjoying it, and then returned to the Museum, rather wet, but very glad that we went. I am told that the scene from the "Cave of the Winds" is even finer and as I know it can't be wetter, I should advise all young voyagers to take that trip.

For the *New York Mercury*, Saturday, November 16, 1867.

KATY'S ROMANCE

"It's of no use, John," said Katy again, with that pretty, knitting of her brows. "I'm sorry as I can be; but if it's all the same to you, we'll go back and be as we were."

"But it's not all the same to me, Katy, and you know that right well," responded John, setting his honest eyes upon her face. "And as for our going back and being as we were, that's all nonsense. We could no more do that than we could go back into infancy. Then it's so foolish of you, Katy."

Katy shrugged her white shoulders, but made a reply not a whit less decidedly than before.

"Foolish or not, John Cambell, I've made up my mind I'll not be engaged to you, because you're too much like Dick and Sam. I want romance. Now if that brother of yours should come —"

"I suppose," interrupted John moodily, "you'd throw me over and take him, just because of his trim mustache and confounded city-ways. That's the way with you women."

"I guess I should," said Katy, provokingly. "He's amiable, at all events; and doesn't say, Confounded."

"Well"—John laughed in spite of himself—"So," said he, "I'm discarded: first, because I am the first man who ever professed to love you (reason enough, too), and secondly, because there's no romance, and I am too humdrum for your taste. Really, Miss McLeod, your reasons do you credit. Just what I should have expected from a girl of your intellect. They are unanswerable, I must acknowledge. Good-evening, Miss McLeod."

And John walked straight out the door and down the walk, never even glancing back for the little faint cry which might have been the wail of a whip-poor-will, but which sounded like poor Katy's voice saying:

"Oh, John!"

The fact was, Katy had been very trying, and John very forbearing, until the little flirt had made up her mind that it would never do to settle down into plain John Cambell's wife, and live in sight of his very unromantic oyster-depot.

With her, to think was to act; and when honest-hearted John went that evening with a basket of peaches for his pet, he was coolly informed that there was no congeniality between them.

Here was a pleasant state of things. There was no end to the fruits and flowers, rides and rows, and delicacies that John had lavished upon that girl. And then this was the worst of it, and what pained him most, he had loved her for two years; and now, as he went home in a — well, we'll say in an unamiable humor — he was forced to confess that he loved her yet. It was unfortunate, very, these life and death attachments always are. But after all, what's to be done about it? John, unromantic fellow, sitting with his feet upon a chair and a cigar between his lips, asked that question many times, and before it was answered to his satisfaction, there was a tap at the door, and in tumbled Dick McLeod.

"Thought I should find you up," said Dick, "so I rushed around here to know what's up between you and Sis. Come, old fellow, let's know."

With a curl upon his handsome lip, John told the story, then paused.

"Well," said Dick, "what's going to be done?"

"That's what I want to know."

"Sis is a dear, good girl, and a nice sister; but she's got a knick in her head that will work mischief all round, if we are not careful. Now, I'll tell you, John —"

And here we must leave them, as Dick drew his chair closer to John's, and spoke so low that only John could hear.

"How handsome John Campbell is growing," said Lide Taylor, maliciously to Katy, about six weeks later; "I declare he's a perfect picture. See, Katy, there he goes. Don't he ride superbly? And that's Carrie Farwell with him. They say they're engaged. Law! They're coming this way."

Kate drew her little form to its full height, and waited — waited with a beating heart and paling cheek; and the gay riders came on, in an easy, graceful lope. How she wished they would hurry. Every hoof-beat was on her heart. Now they were passing.

Ah! he saw her, and lifted his hat with a graceful kindly

ness, more painful because it was so simply kind. And Carrie, too, smiled upon her and bowed until her long curls, and the white plume lying upon them like foam, were all aquiver in the sunlight.

Katy bowed back to them, with Lide Taylor's unfriendly eyes upon her, and then turned carelessly away.

"John is quite a flirt," continued Lide, sweetly consoling. "You're not the only one, Katy, not by a dozen; so you must not fret, deary — he's such a flirt."

"You don't speak from experience," retorted Katy, stung beyond all endurance, "as he never flirted with you. And I don't feel hurt, for it's just as it should be."

"Of course it is, deary, but I thought you looked pale when they passed just now."

Katy turned silently away. She was no match with her enemy in this bushwacking. In an open, hand-to-hand conflict she would have come off conqueror.

It was not Lide's intention to offend, so she followed her friend, and twining her arm about her, began again:

"Do you know, Katy darling, that Nat Cambell is here? He's handsome as a — good gracious, Kit! there he is now. Dick is bringing him up the walk. And my hair is in a perfect muss."

Katy turned with a faint flush upon her cheek, which made her very pretty, and Dick walked straight to her and introduced "Mr. Nat Cambell."

Lide bowed and smiled, and began a chattering conversation. But Nat turned from her to the sweeter face of Katy. At that, Dick knit his brows. He didn't like Nat Campbell. Handsome, stylish, brilliant he certainly was, but Dick would have said he didn't ring clear — there was too much of the base metal about him.

Ingleside gossips reported two engaged couples; Carrie Farwell to John Cambell, and Kate McLeod to Nat Cambell. And they were as near truth as gossips generally are. If Katy desired romance she had it now, for father, mother, brothers, one and all, opposed Nat Cambell. This led to a series of delightful stolen rambles through the lanes, and some charming (or Katy tried to think they were, though she was

in such terrible fear lest she should be found out) drives along unfrequented roads. And this, in time, led to Nat's proposing an elopement.

"It will be so romantic, darling," urged he, bending his handsome eyes entreatingly upon her; "and your father will soon forgive you, won't he?"

What good angel touched Katy's ear then and made her distrust Nat Cambell's voice, I wonder. She hesitated one moment, and then replied: "Yes, Nat, but there is something I must tell you first; you know my father is a stern, unflinching man, and he never breaks his word, and, in short, unless I marry John Cambell, every cent I own in the world reverts to Sam and Dick."

Some words came from between his set teeth Katy could not hear, and then he replied in the same gentle voice in which he always spoke:

"That's bad, Katy dear, very; but you know that I am peniless also; but you surely must have something in your own right."

"Nothing; not a penny, Nat; but you won't mind that, will you?"

"Of course not, my dear," was the reply. But Katy noticed that Nat said no more of eloping that evening.

With all her faults, Katy McLeod was a sensible, kind-hearted girl; and that evening proved her so.

"Nat," said she, simply. "I've been very wrong, I know, though I think you have deserved it, remember; but I want to tell you that I've been flirting with you, for the romance of the thing."

"And won't you marry me, Katy?"

"Marry you? Of course not. Where would be the romance in that, you silly boy? It would be altogether humdrum, for me to marry you and settle down to poverty. Now, wouldn't it?"

"Not very romantic, I am afraid," assented poor Nat. "But, Katy—"

"Don't Katy me, Nat. You know very well enough that you're not able to marry a wild thing like me without something substantial to make up for it; and I know you're not heart-

broken. So let us go home, like sensible people, and keep our own counsel."

Straight through the main street of Ingleside, Katy walked with her somewhat crestfallen chevalier, and so home. She never did anything by halves. She had sinned in her whole-souled way, and now her repentance was of the same kind. Her father and mother were sitting on the stoop, with anxious faces, as she came up the walk (Nat had pled an engagement and left her at the gate); and the prodigal child curled herself down between them and told the whole story, simply and truly, concluding with:

"I'll never be so foolish again, you dear, cross old papa, and you good, good mother; so kiss your naughty girl, and let's make up." How could they resist such a plea; and especially when their little Katy pled? They couldn't. But it was a long time before Katy found out that Dick had been there in advance, and made the way straight for her.

"Such a pretty picture," said Katy, softly to herself; "but it makes my heart ache."

It was a pleasant scene. The setting sun had gilded the rich clusters of grapes to burnished bronze, and turned the vines to gold. Beneath them Katy saw a young girl, robed in white, standing with her arms upraised, to catch a luscious cluster which swung above her head. At her feet, beside a willow basket, half full of grapes, half-knelt Dick. His eyes were upon her face, with an earnest loving look that made Katy tremble for his heart; and back of her, playfully twining a wreath among the dancing, floating curls, stood John Cambell. A pretty picture, very. What a pity it made Katy's heart ache. The girl was Carrie Farwell. Silently Katy was turning away from the scene, only her own heart knowing its bitterness, when Dick caught the gleam of her dress, and called out:

"Hallo!"

He sprang to his feet, thereby overturning the basket of fruit, and beckoned her toward them. Katy shook her head quietly. Dick shook his head saucily.

"Come here, Kitty. Don't you hear your elder brother when he speaks? Come and pick up these grapes, spilled for

your own dear sake; and beside, here are some callers. Not finding you, we decided to be happy, if possible, until you came. Come here, Sis."

With lips compressed and paling cheeks, Katy advanced. Her foolish little heart was all a flutter. John Cambell offered his hand; Carrie Farwell not only offered hers, but touched Katy's cold lips with her own warm, rosy ones, laughing and blushing. Katy wondered what made Dick so happy.

"Katy," said he, "why don't you congratulate the happy ones?"

"Oh, Dick, how can you?" began Carrie. But Dick stopped her. Katy, brave little woman, after the first shock, rallied nobly.

"I do, most heartily," she said, sweetly. "And, John, I must ask your forgiveness for what I said. I have learned better. Carrie, at your best, you can only be worthy of him."

Carrie laughed and looked puzzled. Katy's lips were trembling, and faintness warned her to turn away from them. But a gentle arm supported her — Dick's of course — and the poor child burst into tears.

"It was so hard," she sobbed aloud. "Oh, Dick, Dick."

"There, there," soothed a voice — not Dick's. "It was too bad and I should never have done it only for Dick. He said it was the only way."

Katy sprang suddenly from the embracing arm, and faced — John Cambell.

"It's a shame, sir," she flashed, indignantly. "Here you have been flirting with Carrie Farwell, and broken her heart, and, now you think you'll come to me again. No, sir; you go back to Carrie Farwell, and see if you can grow half good enough for her."

Facing her, with mirth in his honest blue eyes, John Cambell made answer by simply pointing back to the arbor. The golden sunshine, slanting now, gilded Carrie's curls, and shone like a halo about her face; and, wonder of wonders with his homely face transfigured into absolute beauty by the magic wand of love, over her bent Dick. Worse than that, Dick's arm was about the slender waist, and Dick's hand upon the golden brown curls.

“What does it all mean?” asked Katy.

“It all means romance,” was the reply. “My little witch, are you ready for the reality? Let us go and congratulate the new sister and brother elect.”

Kate took the offered arm, but John did not move.

“Katy,” he said, returning meaningly her look, “if you go with me, I shall understand that you forgive all of our wicked plotting, and that you and I are not only ready to give but to accept congratulations.”

And Katy—I’m sorry, for it wasn’t at all romantic; but I must tell the truth at the end of a story — Katy went.

For the *New York Mercury*. December 21, 1867.

LATER PROSE WORKS

SUNDAY SCHOOL CONVOCATION

BIBLE CLASS TEACHING

Among so many Bible teachers of experience and note, I would hesitate to present my crude ideas did I not remember that even the tiniest piece of glass in a kaleidoscope does its share in the formation of the perfect figure which so delights our eyes, and in like manner, every earnest Christian teacher should add to his or her quota, insignificant though it be, to reach a perfect understanding of this most important subject.

Bible teaching theoretically, is delightful and easy, practically it requires all the patience, energy, tact, and intelligence of which the speaker is capable.

The Bible classes generally found in our Sunday Schools are young men and maidens just emerging into manhood and womanhood, full of fun, frolic and conceit, altogether lovable, altogether difficult. Too young to have maturity of intellect and deportment, they are yet too old to be governed as little children. How best to manage, and educate, this element in our Sunday Schools is a problem difficult of solution. We must arrest their attention, excite their interest, stimulate their industry, touch their hearts, and through these avenues, their consciences, thus guiding them by insensible degrees, to the higher life.

They are frequently wearied by too much teaching. As a rule they read many emotional books and find the Bible dry by comparison. They are occupied by their amusements and lessons and unwilling to devote time to Bible study, and they come Sabbath after Sabbath to their classes, congratulating themselves that they are willing to come at all, careless, unprepared, uninterested, and go away again but little better for coming.

How then shall we induce these young people to search the Scriptures until they discover that in them lies the germ of all good books?

Are they fond of history? What other works compare with the quaint histories of the Old Testament? Of romance? Where is the peer of those delightful stories of Ruth and of Jacob? Of poetry? Our greatest poets of earliest ages have stood in silent admiration before the grand and solemn symphonies of the Sacred Writings. Here is an inexhaustible mine of hidden treasures. They have but to search and find.

Our present methods, while presenting a great improvement on earlier efforts, are not entirely successful. Our lesson papers following the Church year, change their theme weekly, and scholars complain that they no more than get interested in a subject than they are obliged to drop it. They are too fragmentary, a few verses frequently being taken from the middle of a chapter. The student learns what is on the lesson paper, but will not take the trouble to read the entire chapter, consequently he fails entirely to comprehend the lesson.

I would suggest that for this method the topical one be substituted — that is, that one subject be taken and followed up, until we have, so far as possible, mastered it.

Consider it in every phase, geographically, historically, and morally. Take for illustration the story of Moses, his beautiful infancy; preservation; education; the glories of Egypt; his abandonment of the higher estate; his sin, and flight into Midian; the long years of his sojourn there; return to Egypt; his leadership of the hosts of Israel; his journey through the wilderness and so on, until he stands on Nebo's top with undimmed eye and unabated strength, viewing from afar the promised land which he may never enter.

This is the story. Now for the method of treating it. First let a map be examined by the class and all the localities spoken of be thoroughly understood. When they once see that such a place as the land of Goshen is really on the map of Egypt they begin to realize the story of Jacob's sojourn there may be real.

Then let each scholar have a few questions which he must answer the following Sunday. For instance the date of oc-

currence, the condition of the land of Egypt at that time, and of the Egyptians, their religion, their civilization, their reigning monarch, the condition of the Jews at that time, their religion, the genealogy of Moses and his parents; all that can be learned of his early life, etc. Each scholar taking separate questions is stimulated to search histories, biblical and secular, text books and dictionaries, rather than come empty handed to his class. He is made to feel himself an important factor in the success of the whole, and by this means becomes interested in ancient and sacred history, and begins faintly to comprehend the gradual development of the wonderful gospel plan.

At his feet are spread all the great treasures of the Orient. By rubbing this Aladdin's lamp he summons to his aid the Genii of all ages. Science opens to him her stores of hard-earned gems; buried cities rise again from their ashes to bear their testimony; obelisks upon the faces carry to him their separate contributions, and even the buried princes of the house of Egypt are roused from their long sleep of two thousand years, to verify the marvelous story. Now indeed the teacher finds it hard work to keep abreast half a dozen young workers, when once their enthusiasm is aroused and their ambition excited.

But, say you, all this is not religion. No, it is but the gate to the garden of Eden. Within and beyond stands the tree of life; but here no angel guards this entrance with a flaming sword. In his place, with sweet and gracious mien, behold the Son of Man, and He says — Come, come, come.

Such searchings store the young mind with the best evidences of Christianity, no one of which must be suffered to escape unnoticed as we progress. Every prophecy, especially concerning our Saviour, can be followed in its gradual unfolding from Genesis to Malachi, until it reaches the perfect flower in the Gospels. For this reason the study of the Old Testament includes the New, and the Old. They are inseparable as cause and effect and a careful training, in this direction alone, arms our young people against a host of infidels. Their feet are set to walk in the narrow path, and so walking, they soon discover that "its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace."

The lessons should be short, pithy, sensible. There should be no tiresome lectures, but on the other hand let no Sabbath pass without pointing out some practical lesson, and let no scholar leave the house without feeling that he, personally, is dear to you, his well-being the especial object of your efforts and your prayers. Let him learn that he has duties and responsibilities which he must accept or refuse, that God loves him, and is leading him.

And so we may go forward feeling constantly our own ignorance and weakness, acknowledging gratefully our Teacher's wisdom and strength, knowing that we shall reap if we faint not, for has not our great Helper said that "bye and bye we shall come again (though we go out with weeping) in great joy bearing with us our precious sheaves?"

The American Church Times, February 25, 1889.

GHOSTLY VISITANTS

DR. HENRY'S STORY

It had been a hard day, but to-night the three doctors sat at ease. Without, the rain and sleet beat upon the window panes, and the savage wind howled about the house; within, the doctor's office the cheery wood fire glowed and snapped in the great open fireplace. Cigars and liquors were on the table and the men, lounging in easy chairs, lazily smoked and grew reminiscent. The host was Dr. Scott, tall, lean and dark, with a massive jaw and keen dark eyes. He had called in the two others in consultation over a difficult case. Dr. Loeb, of Chicago and almost of wide-world fame — tall, portly, broad of brow and thin of lip, nattily dressed; and Dr. Henry, of South Bend, small, alert, and with his reputation yet to make, but greatly interested in the leading questions of the day.

From topic to topic, the conversation had passed until it had finally centered upon the incredible happenings in the novels of the day, and Dr. Loeb remarked, "I like a good novel, but it must appeal to my judgment as likely, or at least possible. Such coincidents could never happen in real life. "How

can you tell?" interrupted Dr. Scott. "It is a truth that life is made up of stranger occurrences than man's imagination can conceive." "Tell Dr. Loeb," suggested Dr. Scott, "of poor old Simon's death, Jack; that was surely ghastly enough." "What was that?" asked Loeb, "astral body? spiritual manifestation? or what?" "Scarcely that," replied Henry, "but for out and out scarey and coincidence, hard to be equalled by any story writer." "Let's hear the story." Jack kicked together the glowing embers in the fireplace and they shot up a shower of sparks which illuminated the faces of the men for a moment and then sank to a glowing bed. No other light was in the room and in the semi-blackness Jack Henry told this story.

"Out here, about two miles from this town, is a tumble down cottage set back from the state road. An old man named Simons had been living alone there for many years. He was there when I came here and I never heard of his having friend or relative. He raised fine garden truck in his little yard and every year grew more thin and haggard and feeble. Last September the farmers passing the house did not see any smoke rising from the chimney, nor the old man puttering about the garden as usual. Finally, one of them went to the door and knocked. Getting no response he opened the door and found the poor, old fellow in his tumble-down bed, absolutely dying from neglect. He called on me and told me the circumstances. I gathered up some necessary things and went out. It was too late to do more than make him comfortable, which I did and he died as he had lived, quietly and alone. So I found him when I called. I did what I could for the poor old body. We country doctors are often undertakers, as well, and I laid him out on a cot in the only living room. The front door and one window opened from the porch. Back of it was the kitchen and a ladder on the wall from this kitchen led to the loft above. I am particular about the location of the rooms because of what happened afterwards. I closed the door of the cottage and drove home, planning what might be done. Suddenly I remembered seeing a large black cat which had belonged to Simons on the porch and I got it into my head that it was not safe to leave that body alone all night. I board at the hotel opposite here and passing at the side door, I saw

Nelly and Lulie, two of the dining room girls and their sweethearts sitting on the steps. I went up and told them of poor, old Simons' death and asked if any of them would volunteer to go out and wake him that night. 'I'm game if you are, Jim,' said Lulie, 'after my work is done.'

"To shorten my story, the four decided to go and later I drove them to the cottage. It must have been about nine o'clock and a beautiful moonlight night. I went in; found all right and advised them to sit on the porch as they could see through the window into the room. Lulie was a Catholic and she had brought candles which she lighted and placed at the head and feet of the corpse. There was a chair we afterwards remembered, at the head of the cot. I saw the four comfortably established on the little porch and went home.

"The next day Lulie told me this story. She said they were sitting there, quietly talking and enjoying the beautiful full moon which made it almost as light as day, when Nelly's sweetheart, Harry Blake, said 'My uncle lives up the road here and he has a fine orchard. I wish I had some of his apples.' 'How far is it?' asked Nell. 'Somewhere near half a mile.' 'Well, why can't we go?' asked Jim. 'We can if all are willing. The corpse will keep.' 'You go, urged Lulie. 'I'll stay here. I'm not afraid and it wouldn't be right for us all to go.' 'If I had your conscience,' Jim asserted, 'I'd take it behind the barn and kick it.' The young people finally trooped off and Lulie watched them as they started up the broad, silver moonlight road. She was not afraid, but it was uncanny sitting alone there. Even the black cat would have been acceptable company.

"She had been sitting alone for perhaps half an hour when she thought she heard a noise — a creaking of steps — a muffled footfall, it seemed — and in the house. She glanced through the window, the candles were burning bright and all was right and she chided herself for cowardice. She wished her friends would come and began to grow chilly. Maybe it was the cat? No, for here was puss coming up the walk. Lulie was getting nervous. She thought she heard a chattering as of teeth grated together. Yes, now she was sure of that, chatter — chatter — chatter — and the noise came from

the room where the dead man lay. For a few moments fear held her captive. She was unable to move — even to turn her head and glance in through the window. Finally — heroine as she was and is — remembering her duty and still hearing that awful clicking of teeth, as it seemed — she resolutely faced the window and — what she saw there paralyzed her with fear. At the coffin head, with the candle light shining full upon him, sat an old man, haggard, almost a skeleton, with long, thin wisps of hair hanging over his face and clicking his terrible teeth together — chattering. He raised his skeleton arms and clasped his long, thin hands above his head, and Lulie could see the wild, gleaming eyes and fearful teeth. He was risen from the dead. With an inarticulate cry, she sprang down the steps and ran into the road, calling to her friends whom she saw in the distance returning from their raid upon the orchard. As she ran, breathless and terrified beyond description, a wagon with two men in it came at speed along the road. They stopped her with a question. ‘Had she seen an old man anywhere around who had wild, gleaming eyes and chattered his teeth constantly?’ He had escaped from the asylum and they had tracked him so far. Lulie told her story and they went to the cottage. One glance through the window showed the maniac, still sitting at the corpse’s head and chattering those awful teeth. A sudden rush, a brief and desperate scuffle and Lulie’s ghost was captured. He had been in hiding in the loft and came down, seeing the lights, to pose as the dead man, resurrected. That’s the story and it’s true, every word. We buried poor old Simons the next day and the cottage has been vacant ever since.”

“That,” said Dr. Loeb, “was an extraordinary coincidence.” “I rather think,” said Henry, “it was the old fellow himself reincarnated.” Dr. Scott flicked the ashes from his cigar, turned up the lights and smiled.

February 1, 1911.

DR. SCOTT’S STORY

“Your’s ” — said Dr. Scott “was merely a coincidence, singular and unusual, no doubt, but there was nothing of the super-

natural about it — now I —” He paused, gazed into the slowly dying fire and added. “I can tell you an experience of my own, for which I have never been able to account. Perhaps you may be better read, or understand more of the occult than I do. At any rate this is what happened, if you would like to hear it?”

“Surely, surely.” “Let’s have it!” cried both of his listeners, and the doctor began.

“Some years ago when I was younger and more foolhardy than I am now, I had drifted in among the Cumberland Hills, being Maryland born, and was for the time being at the Blue Boar, a little Inn lying at the foothills of Iron Mountain. One dark and lonesome evening I was lounging in the bar-room, the only sitting room the Inn possessed, bored, I must confess, as calls had not only been few, but entirely absent, when my attention was aroused by hearing the impact of a horse’s hoofs upon the cobble-stone walk outside. Presently the door opened and a young man entered. He was very tall, thin and angular, but stood with an easy grace that marked him a man of muscle. He wore a butternut shirt with red tie, loosely knotted at the throat, butternut trousers tucked into long cowhide boots, and a slouch hat, and I observed from the sagging of his belt that he was well ‘heeled.’ As he entered, Gus, the inn-keeper, glanced up, raised his eyebrows a little, as in surprise, and greeted the newcomer,

“‘Howdy, Abner?’

“‘Howdy, Gus,’ replied Abner.

“‘How’s the weather?’

“‘Comin’ on to rain,’ replied Abner, in the gentle slow drawl of the Southern mountain men. ‘Shouldn’t wonder ef it ’ud be an unfriendly night.’

“‘Unfriendly?’ — the inn-keeper laughed.

“‘I reckon it’ll be unfriendly enough. There’s a storm brewing. Feud on, Abner?’

“‘I reckon,’ sententiously replied Abner.

“‘Anybody dead yet?’

“‘Not — yet,’ drawled the mountaineer.

“‘Come and have a drink?’

“‘Not to-night. I come for a doctor that I heared was here. Man hurt up our way.’ He turned a penetrating dark gray eye upon me. ‘I reckon you’re him.’

“ ‘I reckon I am,’ I returned with a smile. ‘What do you want?’

“ ‘I want you to come with me, and no time’s to be lost.’

“I turned an enquiring glance at the inn-keeper. ‘Is the man square?’ I asked, and he replied, ‘Abner’s all right. He’s safe enough.’

“ ‘Stranger,’ drawled the young man called Abner, in the softest of voices, ‘I’m square; what I says I’ll do, and I’ll bring you back safe, but you must come. The feud’s on, but I’ll say this, No Bascom, nor Howlitt, ever yet hurt the stranger within their gates.’

“Somehow that quotation decided me. I didn’t relish going out that dark night in those mountain passes with a stranger, and that stranger a feudist, but I had also a good deal of an idea of *noblesse oblige* and, so far, had never refused a call. I arose, gathered up my belongings, medicine, bag and rain coat and announced my readiness. ‘I’ll go,’ said I, ‘but how?’

“ ‘There’s a mewel outside waiting fur you, sir,’ and I found the ‘mewel’ all right standing at the door.

“ ‘What if I had refused to go on this wild goose chase?’ I asked.

“Abner smiled his slow and tender smile. ‘I’ve a right persuasive way with me,’ said he, and as I glanced at his well-filled belt, I thought he had.

“We had been in the saddle, Abner in the lead, but half an hour, when the storm which had been threatening all day broke. Thunders pealed and boomed and resounded, making a continuous roaring. Lightnings flashed and tore and zigzagged from cloud to cloud, lighting up our rugged pathway. The rain came down in torrents, and we were soon drenched to the skin, but our faithful beasts plodded stolidly forward. On either side of us rose the mountains, densely wooded with sombre pine and cedar, and little torrents of water rushed and darted down their sides. It was pitch dark, excepting for the lightning flashes and a small lantern carried by Abner. Up and up and ever up we climbed through that awful gulch. Once Abner paused and said over his shoulder to me, ‘This is Dead Man’s Gulch and all the devils in hell are abroad tonight.’

“ ‘Do you believe that devils or anybody else for that matter can come back?’ I questioned.

“ ‘The mounting people hain’t much book l’arnin’ but they know a lot that other folks don’t know, and they know that when they’re called on a night like this, they *do* come back.’ Abner spoke in an awed tone and then silently resumed his way.

“ On and on again, until I began to wish myself safely back in the Blue Boar. At last we turned from the main road into a bridle path and soon came to a place where even this path abruptly terminated. Abner dropped from his mule and I did the same. He tethered both beasts to the branch of a tree that loomed up in the light of his lantern, and began pushing aside some bushes that intercepted one way. A small rude opening stood revealed.

“ ‘An old still,’ explained Abner, ‘not used now. Don’t you be afraid, stranger, I give you my word I’ll see you safe home again and no Bascom ever broke his word, *dead or alive*.’

“ Through the little door he passed into a cave where coils of pipes, a rusty boiler and sundry other objects proclaimed its original use. There was no sign of occupancy now. At the far end, by the lantern light, I saw a rude door. Abner paused here and faced me.

“ ‘I reckon, stranger,’ he drawled, ‘it’s best that I tell you a few things before we go in there. The Bascoms and Howlitts have been at feud for many years. I don’t rightly know how it started, nor how long it has been goin’ on. Some say that Bascoms’ pigs got into Howlitts’ corn’ (he pronounced it *cohn*) ‘or maybe the Howlitts’ pigs got into the Bascoms’ corn. I don’t know, but I was born a Bascom and stood by my family, and they, bein’ bohn Howlitts, stand by them. Between us, we have had off and on right pretty killings. My dad was one of eight boys and he had eight sons and one little gurl, Loretty, and that little gurl was Dad’s very life, and there wasn’t one of us but ’ud a died fur her any time. She was that purty, with her big blue eyes and head shining like the sun was on it, and that loving, seems like she never saw anything that warn’t all good and sweet. Well, mother was hit by a bullet and died. I don’t think ’twas meant for her, and Dad’s brothers all went one after another and I’ll tell you, stranger’—here his voice rang out—‘a Howlitt bit the dust for every one of them, and we watched Loretty every day. Allus some of us around. One

day Dad was out huntin' and they got him. Jared and I found him before he died, and he made us swear to take care of Loretty. 'Boys,' he said, 'I'll know if harm comes to Loretty, and I'll come back and git her. All the devils in hell, nor all the saints in heaven can't stop me if Loretty needs me.' And we swore, and, stranger, we done all we could, but yesterday the little gurl was sittin' in the sun playin' with her pup and the sun was shinin' on that purty head of hers — and — well, it made a mark. She's hit, but she ain't dead, and I've brung you up here to help her.'

"He led the way into an inner room through the small door. Some effort had been made to make it habitable, a bear rug on the floor, a couple of rude chairs, a table, and on the bed tossed a girl. She seemed scarcely more than a child. Her face was faintly flushed like a wild rose. Her plentiful hair fell like a shower of gold over the pillow, and her big blue eyes, unnaturally bright, looked appealingly into mine. Never have I seen a sweeter face.

" 'My child,' I began gently, 'let us see where you are hurt?'

"A very slight examination showed me that nothing could be done to save her. She seemed not to suffer and her mind wandered. She smiled upon Abner and knew him.

" 'Bring Jared and Tom. They're all that's left now — Dad wants the boys here.'

"From somewhere, two other men, very like Abner, appeared, and the three sons stood sorrowfully looking down upon that little sister.

" 'They're here, Dad,' she smiled as if in her father's face, 'and they all took care of me. I'm to answer for 'em and they're all so dear, so dear, but, Dad, Loretty's so tired, take me in your two strong arms. I want to go to sleep. Dad, Dad, take Loretty!'

"It was the desolate, heartbroken cry of a child, and, boys, I want to tell you this — scarcely had that thrilling call rang out than from somewhere — I don't know where, or how — arose the tall gaunt figure of an old mountaineer, taller by a head than any of his three sons. His hair was grizzled and hung about his neck, his eyes were deeply sunken, but gleamed under his bushy eyebrows with unquenchable fire, and he stood

by that bed and held out his arms. 'Loretty!' he cried. 'Loretty!' and that dying child rose from her pillow and threw herself with a sob of joy into the waiting arms. He stood there for the space of a second among his sons, his little daughter clasped close to his breast, her bright hair falling like a cloak over his arms. *I saw it, and the boys saw it*, and then — the vision was gone.

"Abner spoke. 'Dad never broke his word yet, living nor dead. He's come back and took her.'

"Upon the pillow, with a wonderful smile upon her face, slept the child. We stood in silence looking upon the little form. The air was surcharged with some spiritual essence. We all felt it, and it was only natural that Jared, rude mountaineer though he was, should raise his hands and say, 'Let us pray. God of the mountains and of men! We thank you for all your gifts and for this greatest one, that you have let Dad come back for Loretty and that she is safe with you. Amen!'

"Silently we passed out of the cave; only Jared remained. The rain had ceased and the first faint glint of daylight shone in the East. I mounted my mule and, led by Abner, wound my way back to the Blue Boar. I might have thought the night's happenings only a dream, but the next day I found a splendid bear rug lying at my door."

Henry arose and Dr. Loeb followed suit. "Time I was turning in, doctor," he said.

"I haven't a word to say."

"Nor I," chimed in Dr. Loeb, "only, Jack, don't you ever ask me to take any of your mountain cases, for I won't. I can fight them this side pretty well, but don't want any boomerangs for mine. Good night."

JANIE'S TRAMP

CHAPTER I

Janie turned sharply around with the pan of bread in her hands. She thought that she heard a step at the kitchen door. She was quite right. A man stood there; dirty; ragged; unkempt; with great black eyes that somehow seemed to burn, and

long neglected hair. He was unmistakably a tramp and was demanding his breakfast. "In a minute," said Janie in her brisk business tone—"as soon as the bread is in the oven." The bread was safely deposited, the oven door closed, and Janie turned to face her uninvited guest. "You'd best sit down," she said, "and I'll get you a bite." He came in and sat down. What a contrast he presented to the girl standing beside him—he a young man not over twenty-one years of age, with a face seamed and scarred by the vicious life which he had evidently been leading,—she not more than seventeen years old, with a face pure, healthy, bright and full of energy and life: unmarred by crime, unacquainted with idleness. She brought him some corn bread and bacon and poured out some coffee from the boiler which still stood upon the stove.

Living, as she did, in the far West, she had learned early to detect and fear any member of the great army of tramps which not unfrequently found their way to her door, and to-day she had an especial reason for caution. Keeping a sharp look out upon the black-eyed fellow regaling himself on her bread and bacon, she yet moved briskly to and fro; closing the door that led to her mother's room—where that poor lady was sick; quietly pocketing a revolver which was never far from her sight, and when her visitor pushed his empty plate from him and rose from his chair, she faced him, devoutly wishing that he would go. He did nothing of the kind. Suddenly his heavy hand was laid upon her shoulder, and his quick stern voice—how loud it seemed to her frightened ears—said,

"Now be quiet, I'll have no noise. You've money in the house, get it."

Quick as a flash Janie twisted herself from under his hand, and equally as quick the tramp sprang towards her, but paused instantly, for he found himself looking into the mouth of a revolver.

"Don't stir," said Janie in a low but perfectly audible tone, "or you are a dead man—now march."

For an instant they faced each other, the unarmed tramp with his black and dogged face, the heroic girl with her flaming eyes. There was something in her brave and fearless bearing that awed him more if possible than the appearance of that ugly

little weapon which he was well assured would be used as fearlessly as it was presented.

"By jove," he ejaculated "you are game, I guess I'll go!"

"I guess you will," she retorted with unflinching eyes. "Start! Start, I say."

She backed him out of the kitchen, down the little path to the broken gate, out into the broader road that passed the shanty — down that, step by step, to the cross roads, never once lowering her weapon from its first position — never once turning her eyes from the face of her foe. At the cross roads she paused.

"Now go straight on. If you turn once within shooting distance I'll shoot you."

She scanned his well-knit youthful frame, the young face which might have been so manly, and her eyes softened with a woman's pity. "Oh!" she cried, "You are such a young man to be so wicked. If you have a mother or ever had — how she would grieve over this day's work. Does she know that you are a robber and a thief?"

Janie backed away from him leaving him standing in the road, and he turned and walked slowly onward, carrying with him that vision of a white determined face, those flaming eyes, softened with an almost divine compassion, and that clear voice ringing in his ears — "A robber and a thief" — It had come to that at last. He was a robber and a thief and — God help her — he had a mother. He remembered her now, though he so seldom thought of her, and the recollection troubled him.

"I'll be even with her yet," he muttered. "If I'd a had a shooter to-day, but she had the drop on me."

With his thoughts for company he trudged on to the nearest village, and Janie as soon as he was out of sight — heroic no longer, turned and ran — ran until she reached her own little kitchen where she sank, trembling and breathless, into the nearest chair. She laid her head on the table and burst out crying, not loud, but suppressed and violent, for even in her excitement she remembered the sick mother. After the first paroxysm was over she glanced at her revolver and began to laugh — laughed as hysterically as she had cried before.

"It's well he did not know it wasn't loaded, but I'll not risk that again. It will be loaded next time," said she, and as soon as her trembling limbs would support her, the little weapon, which had stood her friend so surely was properly cleaned, loaded and deposited in her pocket for future occasions. Then like the heroic little girl that she was, Janie went quietly about her work, first bolting the kitchen door. She had long been used to carrying the family burdens and now never dreamed of telling her mother of the scare that she had had. The preceding Spring her father had located this quarter-section, built the shanty, and placed his family therein to "prove" it while he himself wandered about at his own sweet will, speculating a little, working still less, and growing every day he lived, more of a burden upon his family. He was a man of broken fortunes, or rather of no fortune at all; had no especial vices and still fewer virtues; was a "rolling stone" from his boyhood, never contented, but either on the wing constantly or preparing to flit. Now that his broken-down wife and family were in a house of their own, as he often grandiloquently informed them, he considered that he had done well by them and upon Janie and her two little brothers the support of the family mainly depended. A week or two before my story opens, he had more by accident than management, succeeded in clearing five hundred dollars in cattle sales and of course, boasted loudly of the same at every saloon which he visited. He had brought it home ostentatiously and had not as yet, spent or removed it, hence the tramp's certainty of getting the money, knowing that its owner was absent and that a seventeen year old girl was its only protector. That money, or what part of it she might be able to get, represented to Janie a thousand comforts, and was to be protected with her life if necessary. It meant luxury and warmth and medicine for the sick mother; shoes and clothes, and perhaps a term's schooling for Jock and Joe, and it meant a few books for herself — all that Janie could imagine of happiness for the next twelve months was involved in the safe keeping of that money.

Her father had intrusted it to her when he left home and said, "Now my girl, keep it safe and I'll divide with you."

As for the tramp he trudged on to the nearest village, a small mining town, Blücher by name, chiefly remarkable for

its saloons and billiard tables, and as he journeyed and revolved in his mind the day's defeat he grew more ashamed and abashed — he a great strong fellow to be cheated and driven off by a chit of a girl. "Why didn't I choke her," he thought. "I could as easy as not," but the idea was instantly discarded. He was yet young in crime and had never offered an indignity to a woman. Without stopping to analyze his feelings, he was always careful to avoid that.

The pure and gentle face of his mother was unconsciously his guardian angel still, for was not she a woman, and for her sake all women were sacred. Continually that clear and vibrant voice sounded in his unwilling ears as he walked, keeping time with his steps "A robber and a thief!" A brisk four miles walk in the keen frosty air brought him to an outlying shanty distinguished by the name of the Miner's Paradise. A rusty old sign swung on its creaking hinges bearing aloft the caricature of our first mother, holding in her hand — not the apple which wrought such misery to all mankind, but a mug of foaming Lager Beer, fit rival of the apple since it too is the certain harbinger of death, death to all happiness, and virtue, death of body and of soul.

To this paradise our tramp was evidently no stranger for he passed through the bar-room and into an inner room, with the familiarity of old acquaintanceship. A brisk fire was burning cheerily in the open grate, and three or four men sat at a table each with their mug of beer, and a handful of dirty cards. They greeted the newcomer with goodnatured cordiality.

"Hello, Jim Langley, come along, man, and take a hand and a glass." Just as cordially he replied, accepting the offered seat, cards and glass and in a few moments was apparently as care free and comfortable as any one of his happy-go-lucky friends. They played, drank and quarreled, sang songs and told stories, and Jim Langley was the brightest, loudest and gayest of the party, but ever and anon strive as he would to shut it out — above song and story and clatter, his newly awakened conscience heard that clear contemptuous and yet half-pitying voice, repeating over and over, "A robber and a thief" until in despair he threw up his hand and crept up-

stairs to what he dignified by the name of his room. It was in reality a small uncleanly corner formed by the slanting roof, boasting one little window so dirty that the panes were opaque, but it was for the present Jim Langley's home. Here he could be alone, and through his long years of wandering this one old habit had clung to him — a love of some quiet spot, in which he could be free from the intrusion of even his chosen companions. Now he threw himself upon the untidy bed, but those sorrowful indignant eyes still looked into his, that indignant young voice still rang in his ear. With an oath he sprang up, went down-stairs again and joined his companions. For him solitude had lost its charms. A girl's hand had pushed ajar the gates of memory, a girl's voice had awakened his slumbering conscience, and for the first time in all his wanderings, Jim Langley hated being alone.

A few evenings later Janie was gathering her evening's supply of kindlings outside the kitchen door. Jock and Joe sat inside playing at jack-straws and were so engaged in their game that they could not be expected to remember the kindlings. It was growing dusky in the early November evening and with some little nervousness over the strange shadows that were beginning to people every nook and corner of the wood yard, Janie worked fast. Already her apron was filled, and holding it in one hand, she stooped to gather two or three other sticks to complete the load, when suddenly her head was bent forward upon her bosom, there was an ominous "snip, snip" and her head was released from the detaining hand. What was it? What had happened to her? She sprang to her feet, dazed and stupefied, letting the kindling fall. She had heard no step, seen no one, and yet something had happened, what? She put her hand to her head and then she understood. Her long and beautiful hair was gone. That heavy wavy braid reaching far below her waist of which her mother was so proud, had been cut off close to her head. Janie was no heroine now, she burst into very girlish tears and ran into the house as fast as possible.

"It's that tramp I know it is," she sobbed; "but he'll not get away, I'll find him yet."

She called Jock and Joe. They lighted the lantern and

searched every cranny of the piled-up wood, every corner about house and fence; but the search was unavailing for the thief had occupied the time in which she was preparing for his capture to get beyond any chance of capture. Tired at length Janie gave up the search, and went into the shanty bemoaning her loss. Jock and Joe in big-eyed wonder had already preceded her, and she found her mother with a flushed face anxiously awaiting her. Janie ran to her, and laid her shorn head upon her mother's pillow sobbing aloud, "Oh mother, mother, I wish father was home or I wish he was worth anything when he is at home. I am so tired, mother, I wish I was dead; that dreadful tramp he was here the other day and wanted the money. I drove him off with the revolver and he swore he'd be even with me. He's cut off my hair, and oh mother, mother, I don't mind the hair, it'll grow again, but I don't dare think what he'll do next."

Gently, gently, to and fro, over the bent and rebellious head, passed the mother's thin hand; gently, gently, until Janie ceased to sob and grew more quiet and then her mother's voice, so weak and tremulous, but calm and brave, soothed her child as no other touch or voice could do.

"Never mind my daughter, don't carry a three days' burden, yesterdays, to-day's and to-morrow's. Lying here my dear, I am learning to let the Lord carry my burdens. They grew too heavy for me. Try, darling, to let him carry yours. Why did you not tell me of the money? Your father has taken it all with him."

"Yes," said Janie, "I am sorry now I did not let the tramp have it. He might as well for all the good it is going to do us. Mother when I see you in need of everything, and the boys so ragged and dirty, and the baby, and the house, and, and everything so miserable," concluded Janie desperately, "I hate father."

"Oh, my girl, try and be patient. Times will be better soon and father will be different."

Paler grew the poor sick face, more tremulous the lips, and the tears began to course down the thin cheeks. Janie saw it all, and her brave little heart lifted its burden again.

"Well," she said, "I can be patient and,"—with a smile—

“and I wonder what that tramp will do with all that hair. Sell it likely. No, he won’t for I will haunt him. That’s my hair and much comfort may it do him. After all it is much nicer off, my head feels quite light. If only it was Spring instead of fall I’d like it first-rate, but never mind, mother dear, we will make the best of it. Come, Jock and Joe, it’s bed time. Come, baby let us count the ten little pigs.” She took the two year old baby on her lap, put upon it its shabby “nightie” held it to kiss mama; and sitting in the one rickety rocker, sang him to sleep, and as she rocked and sang to the baby her own heart ceased its rapid beating, her own soul caught something of the calm of evening, and the quiet peacefulness upon the sleeping face of the child was reflected in her own. Her mother, watching her, saw the change and said no word. She knew that a hand stronger than her own was stretched out to her child and would help her far better than she. For her the turmoil of life was ended. She stood as it were, upon the border land between life and death, and had reached that point when life, its cares and griefs, had no more power over her, but this little daughter upon whose young and slender shoulders, must needs fall all the cares and dangers of this western home, how fervently she prayed for her. Look which way she would she could see no hope for her except in that. She had leaned upon the father and found him a broken reed. She had tried to battle with circumstances, and now lay a stranded vessel upon the shore. She could only fold her hands and pray.

Janie laid the sleeping baby beside its mother, straightened up the boys’ shake-down, and with more determination than tenderness induced those young men to stop squabbling long enough to go to bed, made her mother comfortable for the night and locked up the house. Then she took pen, ink and paper and sat down, as she said to remind her father that they still lived, and this is what she wrote:

“Dear Father,—

“When you came home I told you of the tramp and you did not say anything, only took the money and the tramp might as well have had it for all the good it is going to do us. Now he has come again and cut off my hair. Perhaps he will get my head

next visit and then what will become of mother, and the young ones? Jock and Joe ought to go to school; and I want some of that money to send them. Mother ought to have a Doctor and must have one. She grows weaker every day, and I am just scared to death with these tramps coming around. Dear Father, come home before you spend your money and take care of mother and the children. I don't think you ought to leave us to be taken off in bits by every tramp that comes this way, and I think you ought to see to the boys. They are so ragged and dirty, and fight so that they will soon be tramps themselves, even little Charlie can say some bad words. Oh, Father, come home and help me find that tramp that has got my hair.

“Your aff. daughter,

“JANIE RYAN LE DERLE.

CHAPTER II

In the meantime Jim Langley made short work of the road that stretched between the little shanty of Le Derle's and the Miner's Paradise. He had no time to think or regret his evening's work for his experience with the girl whose head he had so ruthlessly shorn, had taught him that she was fully capable of following him into the village itself if need be, to obtain her own. His theft of the hair had been an impulse. He was hanging about the cabin to see some means of getting even with Janie, when her bent and busy figure in the fast fading light caught his attention. A ray from the setting sun struck athwart her long and shining hair and in a moment he saw his revenge. It was but the work of a minute to secure his prize and disappear; and now in his breast pocket lay that long and glossy braid. The keen and frosty air pierced his thin summer clothing, but he pushed on breathlessly. “That hair will net me quite a sum,” he thought. “I guess I am even with that girl now. I never saw hair so long and shiny, I'll sell it in Denver, some of those hair fellows will pay me well.” “Even with the girl!” As the thought shaped itself he knew it was not true, for a ghost of a voice sprang into being and “A robber and a thief,” “a robber and a thief,” kept time to his hurried strides until he hailed with delight the tavern door gaily

decked with lights. A brisk fire was burning in the open fireplace of the bar-room and some of his boon companions were already there laughing and telling stories, but not yet settled to their evening's amusements. He pushed his way to the fire, beating his cold hands together, and trying to answer jest with jest, but it was hard work. He was tired, he was cold and heavy-hearted. That braid of hair seemed to weigh him down. He accepted a drink when somebody stood to treat, he took up the dirty and greasy cards and won or lost with equal indifference. Jest and story, and game, the usual entertainment of his life, fell flatly to-night, and long before the riotous and half-drunken crowd thought of separating he pushed back his chair and climbed the ladder that led to his little den. Now he lighted his candle and pipe, and sat down to have a quiet smoke.

A yellow-colored volume lay upon the old store box that served him as a table. This he undertook to read, but soon threw it down and drew off his dilapidated boots. Another attempt at the story; another failure, his attention wavered and the book was cast aside. Thought was too busy. He smoked his pipe out silently, then drew from his pocket the braid of hair and laid it on his knee. "It'll net me thirty dollars," was his first thought. "How mad that girl must be," was his second. Almost unconsciously he passed his hand along its shining, silky length. That hand that had so ruthlessly severed it from its young owner's head, now tenderly, gently, again and again, passed adown the beautiful glossy ripples, and one by one great bitter tears gathered in Jim's eyes and rolled unchecked down his bronzed cheeks. "It's like mother's," he thought, and again he was a bright and innocent boy standing by his mother's chair combing out her lovely hair; once again he saw her gentle face and felt her tender kisses; once again he was at home. How many years since he had even thought of it, or her. "I expect her hair is gray now," he muttered, "most likely thin, and Bob quite a boy. Likely's not he's cut and run too, and the little one Dot she'd nice hair too. She must be quite a girl by this time. She must be, why I declare as large as that girl that owned this hair. I'd like to see them all to-night, and they would like to see me, me," his face flushed

now, "ragged, dirty and not a cent in my pocket, and with it all — a robber and a thief." Still silently passed the hand adown the braid, silently rose and fell the unchecked tears, and by and by arose the cry of his heart and it would not be silenced. "I want to see Mother, and Bob and Dot, and Mother would not mind if I was the worst wretch unhung, mother is always Mother." Like a strain of forgotten music came to mind a verse that he had learned at his mother's knee in the long ago, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." That's like mother, she won't care. She'll always rest me no matter how bad I am." That final thought had comfort in it. "I'll go home to-morrow, I'll sell the hair to get some money." He lifted it and the light gleamed goldenly adown its beautiful length. "Sell it, no," he cried aloud, "I'll sell my shirt first, it's made me think of Mother and if I get there I'll call it blessed." He tore the yellow cover from his discarded book, carefully wrapped his treasure therein and put it into his pocket; then threw himself upon his bed, but not to sleep. Thought, memory, conscience and remorse, a dreadful throng, kept him company and would not be thrust out. He saw himself again a head-strong boy, his widowed mother's only support, he heard again her gentle tones, and saw again the faces of his little brother and sister, and here even in the darkness his eyes flashed, he recalled that smooth tongued, plausible villain whom he instinctively hated, and who after many a stormy scene between himself and his mother, became his step-father. Then there was war to the knife, and one dreadful night twelve years before, the end came of his home life. His step-father had been especially irritating, and he himself especially irritable. They had hard words, and then, even yet Jim recalled it with a shudder, he was tied up and whipped, whipped like a dog by that man, then untied and ordered off to bed with a final kick. To bed with his blood boiling and every nerve in his body tingling from anger and disgrace; to bed to be lashed again to-morrow perhaps — never, never! With steady hands he gathered his little stock of clothing and smaller stock of money and stole softly from the house. His mother he knew was locked in her room lest she would interfere with the punishment of her boy. And so he had gone forth, he Frank Ryan, and as

he went he resolved that even his name, his father's unstained name, should also be left, and from that time he was known as Jim Langley. To-night tossing upon his restless bed he asked himself for the first time if it was well to leave that gentle delicate woman, and those little children to the care of that brute; to-night he acknowledged himself not alone a robber and a thief, but a coward as well, and his resolve to go home grew stronger and stronger. At the first faint gleam of the morning sun through the little dirty panes of glass, Frank was up, and went downstairs. Time was, when being penniless, he would have quietly let himself out of the door and gone on a tramp, but not this morning. Last night's thoughts and last night's visions were yet with him, so he waited until the landlord appeared and offered his services for his breakfast. It was no new thing for Frank to make himself generally useful wherever he happened to be, and now he fell to work with a will; swept the bar-room, washed the glasses, cleaned the spittoons and made the fire. Jack Hayes the landlord watched him in silence a while then added,

"What's up, lad?"

"I'm going home, Jack," answered Frank.

"Home, lad it is a strange word for such as you. I didn't think that you had a home."

"Well I had as good a home as a boy ever had, as good a mother and a little brother and sister, and in that home I never knew want, or heard a harsh word."

Jack had his elbow on the counter, rested his face in the cup of his hand and contemplated Frank.

"You'd a mother?" he asked, "and a good one and you left her, and the kids, yer father mabbee."

"Father was dead."

"Dead!" ejaculated Jack, "and you shipped the good mother and the kids to do for theirselves. Lad, I did not think it of you."

"I had a step-father," said Frank sullenly, "and he whipped me and I left that same night, twelve years ago, and I have not seen any of them since."

"And you left your mother," repeated Jack meditatively, "to fish for herself, for one lickin'. Now, look here, my lad.

I ain't good and don't pretend to be. I didn't come of no good family, but growed up in Rag Alley anyhow. I'd a mother, and when she wasn't in liquor she was good to me, but she was mostly in liquor, and at them times I'm bound to say she was beastly. I used to lay down nights oftener hungry and cold and sore from the beatings I'd had than not, and my mother (I never had a father as I know of), she was a poor creature and couldn't let rum alone, so she went down, down, until she couldn't get lower, and I stuck by her to the last, 'cause you see that she was all that ever loved me and all I had to love. But you, Jim, I'm ashamed of you. If so be's you have such a mother as you say, how'll she like to see you coming home ragged and dirty without a cent to bless yerself with?" Here Jack gave a comprehensive glance at Jim's old summer coat, out at the elbows, ragged pants, dilapidated boots, and even the faded and worn hat did not escape him. "And after you leavin' as you did."

"Mother will always be glad to see me no matter how ragged or dirty or bad I am," was the reply, given with conviction.

"Then," said Jack solemnly, "go; if so be's that there's such a woman as that on earth, go right along and don't you ever come back to such as us. She'll maybe save you, and I like you too well to ever want to see you again."

With this rough benediction in his ears Frank set out on foot for his far eastern home. He enquired the distance from town to town, and generally following the railroad track made fifteen or twenty miles a day, stopping occasionally to do a little job for a meal, or earn a few pennies with which to buy bread. Occasionally by hanging around the stations and doing a few chores he secured a free ride in the baggage car from one point to another. Occasionally, too, a detention from bad weather occurred, and all such hours Frank utilized by earning what he could at anything which he could find to do. With what delight he reckoned the miles traversed at the close of each day! Thoughts of home grew and grew, until they occupied his whole attention. Many times, when resting under some friendly tree or fence corner, had he taken the braid of hair from his pocket and caressed it like a living thing. "It's so like mother's," he would say, "and it makes me want more and more

to get home. Some way I feel that mother needs me and that I must get there as soon as I can."

Tired with the thought he would spring up and resume his journey. When he reached Kansas City, tired, cold and hungry, he could have shouted for joy. He had advanced slowly in spite of his earnest efforts, and it was already the last week of November. The days were growing colder and shorter, and he suffered from insufficient clothing and food; but still he pushed on doggedly and courageously.

After leaving Kansas City, still following the line of the railway, he walked with great difficulty. It was a chilly, disagreeable day. Piercing winds seemed to spring up at every corner, and like the darts of the wicked, except that they were not fiery, wounded him through every rent in his garments. He had had nothing to eat since the morning meal earned in the depot, and now was devoutly wishing that he might see his way to a supper and shelter for the night. The sun was already set and night was fast coming on. He remembered the little town of Chester must be situated just about here. It surely ought to be near, and a river must be crossed before reaching it.

A sudden turn in the road brought him face to face with both river and bridge. The latter was built on trestle-work with a draw in the middle, through which boats might pass. Frank stepped carefully along the ties, looking down into the chasm through which flowed the rapid river, seething and foaming in its rocky bed. His eyes followed the line of the bridge and as he looked he stood still, looked and looked again. No lights were on the bridge, and the draw was open. His heart sank. His feet refused to stir; for already, in the distance, his quick ear caught the distant rumble of the Night Express. What should he do? It was coming, coming to certain destruction unless he could stop it. But how? Frank was no longer cold or tired, his blood ran like fire in his veins. He felt in his pocket for a match with the instinctive motive that he must have a light, and found one, only one, but from his lips arose a devout "Thank God" for that one. In its tiny flame lay the safety of the train. He tore off his old cotton coat, that garment in which he had shivered all that day, and which he had

frequently anathematized. Now he was ready to bless it for being what it was, old and cotton. This he wrapped around his stick. Then he struck his one match, guarding the tremulous flame from the air until it caught and flashed into yellow light.

Nearer and nearer came the fated train! Would he be in time? Could he save them yet? He thrust his match into the frayed edges of his coat. It caught, flickered, flamed up. With a cry of joy Frank dashed back along the way he had so lately come, faster and faster, as he heard the breath of the iron monster rushing along. A moment and he is around the curve, his flaming torch in his hand, and the engine is almost upon him. A cry from Frank, whistles; bells; ringing; brakes reversed so rapidly that the whole train rocks; steam shut off; and just as Frank's torch flames up so vividly and dies out into a mass of reddened embers clinging to his cane, the engine stops and Frank is within a foot of the cow-catcher.

"What's up?" shouts the engineer, but poor Frank cannot speak. His ghastly face gleams in the lantern's light. He can only point backward over the way that he has come. Ready hands draw him into a car. Men with lanterns run forward to ascertain the trouble, and then they see the open draw, the missing lights, and far, far below they hear the angry rushing of the hungry river over its rocky bed. Then they know that some miscreant has decreed the destruction of the train, and they also know that three hundred people owe their lives and safety to the courage of a tramp.

It has been said many times that mankind is proverbially ungrateful. Frank did not find them so that chill November night, when he was unceremoniously hauled into the car, hatless, coatless, hungry and cold. Food and drink were forced upon him. An old gentleman, double Frank's size, tore off his great coat and buttoned it about the boy. A second took his hat, black and shiny, from the rack and jammed it upon his head. It was too large and was only prevented from utterly extinguishing him by the size of his ears. Frank caught a glimpse of himself in one of the panel mirrors, and having a keen sense of the absurd he burst into a hearty laugh. Those who had gathered around him joined in, and the owner of the hat snatched it from his head.

"I'll line it for you," he cried. "Fellow travellers! This hat is too big for the boy that has saved all your lives this night. Who'll help to save his?"

"I," responded a grave old Quaker, carefully abstracting a ten-dollar bill from a drab leather pocketbook. "And I, and I, and I," were the hearty responses, and when the hat reached its new owner it was so well lined that there was no room for his head. He gratefully accepted this tribute to his bravery; returned the fat man's coat, and was immediately supplied with another and a better fit. A soft woolen cap also appeared, and the owner of the stovepipe, after emptying its content into his own purse, and handing it to Frank, replaced his hat in the rack.

"I did not want a reward," protested Frank, but the old Quaker observed, "Thee had best; that is thine own," and a young fellow back of him said, "Don't be a muff; there's not less'n three hundred dollars there," and the conductor observed, smiling, "Put it up, man; here's a free ride to Chicago for my share. We might have been at the bottom of the river but for you."

The draw was carefully closed, lights readjusted, and the rescued train proceeded cautiously upon its way.

Frank settled himself for a quiet nap in his seat, but was soon roused by the young fellow back of him leaving his place and taking the vacant one by Frank. "Excuse me," said he, "but I want to hear how you did it; a deuced plucky thing for a cad like you to do. Give me the story just as it happened, won't you?"

"There's little of a story about it," replied Frank. "I saw the draw open and I tore off my coat and set it on fire and stopped the train."

"Well, I'm proud to know you; my name's Green. What's yours?"

For the first time in years Frank hesitated in giving his name. Heretofore he had been glad to cover his life with an assumed one, but now when he was going home to his mother and had done a worthy deed he felt that he should resume his own name, so he said, "My name is Frank Ryan."

After that, the young man Green became very entertaining

and he told adventures and jokes until poor Frank, already tired out, fell fast asleep, and neither the starting nor the stopping of the train disturbed his repose until the rising sun beamed brightly into the car window. Then he woke with a start. At first he was confused and could not recall yesterday's occurrences; but soon his memory cleared all up, and he realized that he was no longer the penniless tramp in a ragged coat and disreputable hat, but a hero with a nice coat upon his back, a good hat on his head, and three hundred dollars in his pocket. His hand slipped slyly into that pocket to assure himself that it was no dream. Surely not, for he felt the pocketbook safely lying in its depths. The young man Green was gone; left the car at some way-station, Frank supposed, and discarded him from his mind. He had so much to think about. His money! Never until now had he realized how hard it had been for him to go home, a tramp, and without a cent, but now when he reached Chicago he would buy his mother a shawl, and Bob and Dotty lots of toys. He would go home in state, as it were, and by taking the train reach there so much the sooner.

So Frank built his castles in the air, all resting upon the pedestal of his precious money. As the day grew brighter, people began to stir restlessly and rouse themselves. The porter passed through, extinguishing the lights, and before long everybody was good-naturedly or fretfully on the lookout for breakfast. Frank, as the hero of the night, had a sumptuous meal brought in from the dining-room car, nor had he any occasion to draw upon his lately acquired wealth while on the train. It was almost midnight of the following night before they drew near Chicago.

The train was behind time from some slight accident, but Frank's heart was so light that he sat with his face wreathed in smiles. How rapidly he was nearing home! Once at Chicago the way was so short, and now with bells ringing and whistles shrilly cutting the midnight air, the train, like some great serpent, slid its slippery length along the outskirts of the great city. It lay in shadow, the deep and solemn shadow of night, but scarcely asleep, for it appeared to blink its hundreds of eyes at the train as it came in. Here and there a belated pedestrian strode along the sidewalk. Carriages with their

lamps, and hotel busses, were frequent. Policemen, too, in their uniforms paced slowly along their accustomed routes.

Frank saw all this from the car window, shadowing his eyes with his hands to see the clearer into the darkness beyond, and when the brakeman opened the door and called out Chicago (which sounded like any other name rather than Chicago, as is the manner of brakeman announcements), before he had fairly slammed the door Frank was on his feet and ready to leave the train. The conductor came through, and he thanked him for his through ride.

"That's all right," was the reply. "If it hadn't been for you some of us would 'a' been shunted-off on to another and a longer road, mighty sudden. Good luck go with you, young fellow, and hearken: You've showed that you ain't the stuff that tramps are made of, and that you are the stuff that heroes are made of. Can't you give up the tramp business and take the other route?"

Frank's face flushed and he answered, "I'll try; thank you, sir."

A cordial shake of the hand, a hurried exit from the car, pushed forward by those back of him and retarded by those in front, bells ringing, brakemen calling, people shouting, a band of wretched music playing across the street; in fact, all the usual noise and bustle of entering a large city, and Frank stood in the depot alone. Yes, alone, though surrounded by crowds, hurrying to their homes or to the waiting-rooms.

Frank resolved, having money, to go to a quiet hotel, of which he knew, and have a rest before the morning train went out. Accordingly he stepped briskly out from the depot, ignoring the importunities of the hackmen, and walking up the street. Before he had gone far he began to think of his money (it was more than he had ever owned before), and of all the luxuries that money represented. Green said there was three hundred dollars. He began to wonder how Green knew and then to long to count his money himself. A gas lamp at the corner of a silent street attracted his attention. Thither he went and, looking cautiously about to assure himself that he was unobserved, Frank sat down upon the curb-stone and drew from his pocket his precious treasure. How thin it seemed, he thought smilingly,

to hold so much; and then he opened it. A thrill ran through his frame; a sudden pallor overspread his face, and a faintness came over him. He looked, and looked again, with that sickening sense of evil, and then, clutching his empty pocket book in his hand, poor Frank fell prone to the sidewalk. His money was gone!

CHAPTER III

When Frank aroused himself from the stupor into which he had fallen, he understood at once how his sad loss had come about. He remembered the young man who had so affectionately and familiarly taken the seat by his side; who chatted to him so affably and who, alas, left the car so secretly, whilst he, foolish fellow, slept. His wealth had taken to itself wings and flown to the depths, the wicked depths, of the young man Green's pocket.

Frank trembled as with the ague, and then tears — hot, salt and indignant — poured over his cheeks. He had built so fair a castle upon the foundation of that money! It had meant so much to him! It was to be the beginning of a newer and better life. It was aid for the dear mother, who was drawing him steadily with the cords of her love homewards; but it was gone. He could see no way of regaining it.

"How could that thief be so mean" moaned poor Frank.

"Mean!" echoed his uneasy conscience. "You to call him mean! Remember the money you tried to steal, and the braid of hair you did steal, because that brave girl resisted you. It's just right; you're served right."

"So I am," assented Frank, sitting up straight. "I'm worse than he a thousand times. That lovely hair! I wonder if that girl would forgive me if she knew that the hair helped make a torch that saved the lives of a trainful of people! If it hadn't been for that hair and its looking so like mother's, I'd never have been there to save them either."

Frank, in his thoughts, summed up the situation thus: "No worse off than I was before. Rather better, having a decent coat on my back and a good hat on my head, so I'll curl in somewhere to-night and to-morrow take the road."

He had been so long accustomed to consider ways and means, irrespective of money, that now the best and the cheapest plan at once presented itself to him to go back to the depot, lounge about the waiting-room until daylight, and take his chances of a job by which he could earn his breakfast. This he did and in a few moments, his cap tipped over his eyes, he was in a sound and dreamless sleep; with the happy-go-lucky spirit of his race, he wasted no time in vain regrets.

When he opened his eyes the early morning sun was struggling through the dirty window-panes, and a stout woman with her dress pinned up above a blue linsey petticoat was on her knees washing up the floor. Frank went to the washstand, gave himself a cool and brisk wash, used the comb tethered by a cord, upon his shaggy head, mentally vowing to have his hair cut with his first spare quarter; and emerged, looking very little like the ragged, dirty and worthless tramp that had stood upon the bridge but a few hours before. So much has soap, water, combs, a decent coat and hat to do with the making of a man, in appearance at least.

He walked the length of the depot several times, finally pausing before the dining-room as the door was already open, and a fat and florid man was briskly sweeping out the room.

"Do you want anything?" he asked Frank, as the latter walked up to him.

"I'd like a job of some kind, I want to earn my breakfast. I was robbed of my money last night," said Frank apologetically.

"They mostly always is," muttered the man *sotto voce*. "If they ain't robbed, they lost it, purse and all. It's one or other of 'em does for 'em!"

"You don't believe me," asserted Frank, "and yet I tell you the truth. I stopped the train on the bridge and burnt up my coat to do it, lost my hat also, and they took me on the train, gave me this coat and hat and a purse of money. A young fellow back of me said there was three hundred dollars. He came and sat by me, and when I fell asleep he left the train. He left the pocketbook in my pocket, but the money is gone. My name is Frank Ryan. Haven't you heard the story from some of the passengers?"

Yes, the landlord had heard the story, and Frank's straightforward, truthful manner convinced him that the hero of that story was before him. He was at heart a kindly man and would willingly help a trustworthy young man to earn a meal, besides was he not short of waiters, and was not the "six-train" always on time?

"I can do most anything; wait on table, or wash dishes."

The man resigned the broom to him. "Go ahead," he ordered curtly, "sweep, dust, make fire, help set table, wash dishes, get breakfast; bargain!"

"All right, sir," and our hero fell to work with his woman's weapon, and he worked so well that the landlord, Mr. White by name, as he bustled about, congratulated himself upon his new boy.

After the "six-train" had thundered into the depot, belched out its hungry and weary travellers, gathered them up and thundered out again, Frank went to the landlord and repeated with a little twinkle of his eye, his orders for the morning, as accomplished, "Swept, dusted, fire made, helped set table, washed dishes, now get breakfast; bargain!"

That individual heaped a plate lavishly with edibles, poured out a cup of coffee, set both before him and commanded laconically, "Eat!"

This command was obeyed literally and energetically and then Frank, thanking his employer, rose to go, when the latter said, "Stay, do work, get wages. I want boy, you want place, bargain!"

"No," smiled Frank, "I can't stay. I'm going home. I want to see my mother."

"Walk?" queried the man.

"Yes."

"Far?"

"About sixty miles."

"Exercise?"

"Yes," said Frank, "I've walked most of the way from Denver, and I'm good for sixty miles, I guess."

The landlord put a silver dollar in his hand, saying, "Buy dinner and supper, don't forget," and Frank was once more on his journey, friendless and alone.

"But how light my heart is," said he. "By to-morrow night I shall be home."

All day he walked briskly and steadily, only stopping at a farmhouse for his dinner, and putting a roll in his pocket for supper. When night overtook him, he had made good progress. He secured lodging under the friendly roof of a barn, and daylight saw him again starting upon his journey.

Once or twice he was so fortunate as to get a few miles lift in some passing wagon, and at last, at last, just as the evening sun was hanging like a great golden ball in the violet, orange and purple drapery of the western sky, he saw the familiar spire of the little church at which he had worshipped when a boy. A moment before he had felt himself tired, footsore, hungry, but now, now, he was so gay and fresh that he felt like shouting, "Mother! Home!" Down the little, narrow, brick-paved street he went, breaking into a run, regardless of the curious eyes that followed him; down that street, up another and still another, until he saw his old home.

There it stood, with the same little gate standing open, as if inviting him to enter; the same lilac at the front window, grown to a great bush now, and lifting its leafless arms against the house. The green paper blinds at the windows were drawn, and for the first time since his starting for home Frank's heart misgave him. What if they were all dead? He had not thought of that, yet it might be that death had been there before him. The thought bade him pause. He ran no longer, but with a heavy and halting step entered the little gate and slowly walked up the little gravelly path to the door. Once on the steps he paused again, and then gave a gentle knock, too gentle, for it was unheard. Another and a louder, brought to the door a strange woman, with a little girl clinging to her dress and peeping timidly out to see the stranger. Again Frank's heart fell. Where was his mother? Who was this stranger in his old home?

He found voice to ask for his mother, Mrs. Ryan, and then recollected that she had another name and corrected himself. "This used to be her name. Does she live here?"

"I guess that's the woman that moved out when we come," was the reply. "They ain't here, they went West, as I've heard, but I didn't know them."

The woman held the door suspiciously half-closed, but Frank did not notice that.

"Gone West," and he perhaps had passed through the very town where they were. All his long and weary journey was for nothing, then, and he must go back, for find them he would; back, but where?

"Do you know where they went?" he asked, adding, "I am her oldest son and have come from Denver to see her. Do you know if they were all —" alive, he could not utter, so he said — "well?"

"No, I don't know about them. All I know, my husband took the house from them.

"Did he buy it?" asked Frank, "or do you lease?" It seemed a sad thing for him that even his home should have passed into strangers' hands.

"We bought," was the reply. "The lady was dreadful set against selling the place, but he got around her some way. Least-wise my husband said so."

She looked at her questioner carefully and then invited him in. Tired, disappointed, cold and hungry, he readily accepted her invitation, and once more set his feet in the home of his boyhood. Dear home, how it revived his recollections of the past! There in that corner was Dottie's little cradle bed, here Bobby sat, and here a sun, around which revolved all these home planets, sat his mother.

His hostess, who informed him she was called Mrs. Hall, bustled about laying the table for supper and soon her good man came in, tired and dirty from his work. He seemed a jovial soul and after a refreshing wash, came and sat down by the fire and was introduced to Frank. He could tell him something more than his wife had done, for he had seen the family. His mother, so he told Frank, was always sickly and the girl was as fine a little gal as was in those parts.

"And the boy?" asked Frank. "Bobby."

"I don't know of any boy. I never saw one, maybe he had run away too," said Mr. Hall.

A thrill ran through Frank. Suppose he had, and left his mother to her fate!

"As for the man," continued Hall, "he was the slipperiest

customer that I ever dealt with. I watched him like a hawk and then he got the better of me, but, law, I needn't grumble, for his sharpness never does him no good. He sharpens his knife so keen that he allus cuts his own fingers with it."

Frank found his new friends hospitably inclined; he stayed to supper and accepted the offer of a shake-down in the kitchen, made by the wife, probably in consideration of the attention that he paid to the children. Being fond of little ones and of diverting them, he was not in the house an hour before the two older ones were on his knees and even the baby laughed when he whistled. He did not resent the meaning glances exchanged between husband and wife before she gave the invitation, for he had been a tramp too long not to understand the estimation in which those gentry are held.

"I don't want to stay and not pay for my bed and board," he said. "Now, if you will let me cut some wood in the morning, or clean up the yard, or any chores, I'll stay and thank you," and stay he did.

Sabbath morning Frank rose and looked out of the low window at the rising sun. This then was his home coming. No mother's kiss, no sister or brother; strangers in the old place, and instead of the dear welcome and rest that he had expected here, penniless, friendless, alone, he saw only another long and weary journey back. Should he give it up? As he lay back on his pillow he half resolved to cease his search, when suddenly, how or whence he knew not, whether it was fancy or reality he did not know, but this was certain, he heard a voice, his mother's voice, calling loudly: "Frank, Frank, come, come!"

"Mother, mother, I am coming," involuntarily answered the boy, and now there was no hesitation, no thought of giving up his search. Living or dead he would find his mother, but in his own mind he was convinced that she was living and needed him, for had she not called him? He arose from his rude couch and quietly let himself out the kitchen door. The family were not yet astir and he could not rest. The rising sun was glinting sky and earth with its golden glory, and the cool frosty air refreshed him. On a brow of the hill back of the house the village graveyard rose ghostly in the hazy light. Frank went thither,

wanting to see once more his father's grave. He unlatched the gate and wended his way by the well-remembered path to his father's resting place. It was there, neglected and grass-grown of course, and by its side another, smaller, fresher. With a sudden start Frank stooped, pushed aside the heavy growth of last summer's weeds and read, "Sacred to the memory of Robert Ryan, second son of Frank Ryan," then followed age and date of death, but Frank read no more. Robert Ryan! Why that was Bobby, little Bobby, and he was dead! He sat down and leaned his head against the stone.

Surely, surely the hand of the Lord was heavy upon him. His heart cried out one moment against it and the next he acknowledged that it was just. He had left them and why should he expect to find them alive and well? Bobby had had to take up the burden that he had thrown aside. What wonder then that his slender shoulders had been too feeble to bear them, and he had sunk beneath them! Tenderly, with tears raining from his eyes, he cleared the weeds away from Bobbie's grave, solemnly and sadly he consecrated himself, here by Bobbie's grave to a new and earnest life. He would find his mother and Dottie and henceforth their comfort should be his care, and he would so live that Bobby, who he felt was somehow watching him, should not be ashamed of him. The solemn silence of the early morning, the loneliness of the place, and above all the graves of his dear ones lying neglected at his feet, affected him as nothing else could have done. A cry arose to his lips, earnest and sincere, "O God, help me, help me!" and into his soul came the answer, "that peace which passeth understanding" that calm assurance of aid, that firmness to achieve and patience to endure, which made Stephen's face to shine in the midst of torture and St. Paul to cry out joyously in the greatest of his persecutions, "I have fought a good fight."

When Frank returned to the cottage he found the family busy preparing breakfast. Mrs. Hall said, "I thought you'd slipt away, and I told Hall that I'd been mistaken in you, but I'm glad to see you've come back." As she spoke she looked at him and the new light in his face appealed to her at once. Without understanding the cause she saw the change, and did not add, as she had intended, the slur, "For your breakfast."

"I went," said Frank, "over to see my father's grave, and I found there my brother's also. It was a great grief to me."

"So it must 'a' been, sir, and I'm sorry I spoke so. Breakfast's ready, now come and eat, I'll call Hall."

"Hall," summoned, appeared with a child in each hand, and a few moments later the little family, gathered about the simple meal, bowed their heads and asked God's blessing upon them. It had been many years since Frank had sat at a Christian family's table, and this quiet Sabbath morning, coming as it did after his visit to his brother's grave, touched him greatly. How happy and contented, how innocent and unselfish, seemed these simple people. After breakfast Frank, as he could so well do, made himself generally useful doing the small chores about the house, and then announced his intention of pushing on.

"Where are you going?" said Mr. Hall.

"I am going to find mother, wherever she is. Can you tell me where I could get news of her?"

"It's likely the man at the hotel could tell you, but you'd better stay here to-day, I don't go in for travelling Sundays somehow, and start tomorrow."

Frank was ready to accede to this, but to his mind rose the cry that he had heard "Frank, come, come," and he answered, "No, I must go. I'm sure mother needs me."

He bade them good-bye and went at once to the one hotel in the place, and there he learned that the family had gone to Chicago and had left the address, "Mrs. Gay's boarding house, Gorman St., 960," which the landlord kindly searched for in his book and gave the boy.

Back then to Chicago, begging rides, walking, getting a meal as he could or doing without, travelled Frank, and when he reached Mrs. Gay's boarding house, he found that lady in a towering rage against his step-father. She recollected him very well indeed, had good reasons to do so and didn't want to see him or any one related to him as he left two weeks' board unpaid and skipped out. She found out that they had gone to Denver, but she could not follow him or get her dues. She only hoped his son, if he was his son, would pay it. Frank disclaimed all relationship to her debtor and stopped only long enough to procure the necessities of food and changes of cloth-

ing, by means of a few days' labor, when he once more took up his long and weary journey westward, counting the hours as they passed and hearing, even in his dreams, his mother's voice calling in soft entreaty, "Frank, Frank, come, come!"

The weather was cold and he was poorly clad, and often the sharp and icy wind beating in his face almost took his breath, but still he pushed on, drawing nearer and nearer to his goal. Sometimes a friendly engineer would take him on the engine from one station to another — sometimes a kindly man gave him a lift in his wagon, oftener he trudged along with a small pack on his stick, eating and sleeping as best he could. Weary, hungry, cold, with blistered feet, but a stout heart; and every night as he sought any shelter obtainable and laid down his tired head, he called out cheerily as if in answer to the voice which urged him on, "I'm coming, Mother, I'm coming."

CHAPTER IV

"Open the blinds, Janet, it's still light and you can see further down the road. Can you see him yet? He's on the way."

"Mother dear," said Janie softly, smoothing the gray hair of the invalid, "he will be here presently. You know he doesn't know you are sick."

"Yes, he does, Janie. Every night when I lie awake I hear him calling out, 'I'm coming, Mother, I'm coming,' and I know Frank; he was ever a headstrong boy, but he never told me a lie — and, Janie, I have been with him these many days when you thought I slept. Miles and miles have we travelled together. We have been hungry and cold and weary, but all the time getting nearer and nearer, and to-night, to-night, Janie, he will come."

The invalid's eyes were bright and glittering, her pale cheek flushed with a feverish glow, and as she talked she clasped and unclasped her thin hands. Janie turned away with a strange sinking at the heart. Her mother, she knew, was dying, and she thought her mind wandered, but in a few moments the dying woman spoke again.

"I have prayed that he might come before I go, I could not

die and leave you and the children, God knows that I could not, and he is bringing Frank back to take care of you, and now he is here. Can't you hear his step on the frozen ground — nearer, nearer and nearer. He is in the lane, he is in the yard. Look! look! Janet, you will see him now."

Mrs. LeDerle's eyes were wild with excitement. She rose in her bed and supported her head in her hands, and Janie, as she had done so many times before to satisfy her mother, looked out upon the road. It was late in the afternoon and the sun was shedding its golden glory over the western sky, and sharply outlined against its brightness she saw the figure of a man — a traveller apparently. As he came nearer she discerned his staff and bundle; he reached the crossroads and turned up the lane leading to their house. Her heart gave a great leap. Had her mother's vision been prophetic? Had indeed her long lost brother come at the call of that dying mother?

She turned to the invalid whose eyes easily read her face, "You see him! You see him!" she said.

"I see a man coming towards our house, but, mother dear, do not be too sure. It may be a stranger or father."

"No, no stranger, and father has forgotten us, only my son, may God be praised!" sighed she, with infinite content. "He is not too late. Bring him in, Janet, and then, after a while, the other children."

She lay back upon her pillow and closed her eyes, evidently to gather all her strength and energies to meet her son, but no doubt of its being he crossed her mind. He was here in answer to her call, her prayer. Had not he said, "Ask and ye shall receive."

Obedying her mother, Janie ran to the door to admit the stranger. Her mother's faith had so strongly influenced her mind that she scarcely doubted that her brother, whom she hardly recollected, had indeed come, and she flew to the door and threw it open before he had time to knock. Before her, his black eyes dimmed with tears, his head bowed in shame and contrition, no longer ragged, or dirty, but with a new light on his face, stood her tramp. She was first to recover herself. "You! You!" she cried. "How dare you!" and he lifted his eyes to her face and held out his arms appealingly to her.

"Dot, Dot, my little sister, don't you know me?"

Before she could reply, from her mother's room came a wail, "Frank, Frank, come, come quickly," and he pushed his sister aside and ran towards the room from whence came the cry. What a meeting was that! The dying mother and repentant son sat folded in a close embrace. Tears bathed his face, but not hers, for her life had now no grief, death no terrors.

"I was with you," she whispered, "all the way back. I saw you at home, at Bobby's grave, and I have been with you ever since. Bring the children."

They brought them, Jock and Joe and baby Charlie. She looked at them sadly, but not regretfully.

"Frank," she said, "they have no mother — nor father," she added.

"Mother, I will be their father," said Frank. "Do not fear for them. I have sinned; that shall be my expiation. Dot and they shall grow to trust me and, so far as in me lies, I will bring them all to you in Heaven."

She lifted her wan white arms and folded them about his neck. She laid her head with its lovely silver hair upon his breast, and Janie led the children quietly away. "Thank God, Thank God!" Frank heard her whisper, and when he looked at the peaceful and joy-illumined face as it lay upon his breast, he smiled — yes, though he knew that the dear and tender heart which so lately beat against his own was forever still.

And now for Frank began a new and noble life. Inch by inch he fought his idle and evil habits, day by day he labored manfully and faithfully for the little ones dependent upon him. Janie's pure and noble influence was his safeguard. For her he took and kept the pledge; for her he studied and toiled, and in her he had his reward. The worthless father occasionally reappeared and was an added burden; a burden but never cast off, for Frank's conscience was always upbraiding him for the past, and each trial was hailed as a fresh means by which he might prove his repentance. And many a night as he lay upon his bed he heard his mother's voice calling, "Frank, Frank, come, come," even as it had called him in the little home cottage. It nerved him to nobler deeds, it urged him to higher and holier living, it made him lift life's burdens patiently and

bravely with the hope of meeting her again, feeling sure that at the gates of pearl she is waiting for him, even as she waited in the little log cabin, sure of his coming as she was then; and sometimes in the gloaming, as his thoughts follow her, he fancies she can hear his voice as he whispers, "I'm coming, Mother, I'm coming."

FINIS

ROSIE AND HER GODMOTHER

You must know that Rosie had a godmother. She was not Georgie's godmother, but after the manner of old ladies, she liked once in a while to read Georgie a lesson as well; and even Mabel, although she was a great girl eleven years old, came in for her share of teaching. I don't think that Rosie's mother knew that little old fairy came to see the children until one day when they had been unusually naughty. Georgie had cried to have his own way; he and Rosie had quarrelled and mamma had sent both children to bed. Rosie was very angry and cried herself to sleep. Georgie whispered his little prayer, forgot his ill-temper and also dropped into slumber. Then what do you suppose happened? It was just dawn, and the first faint little golden streak of daylight shone in through Rosie's window, and upon the foot of Rosie's bed, yes and upon something else too for there stood the strangest little withered up old woman not so high as Rosie's kitten. She wore little high-heeled red slippers, and blue stockings, and a red gown tucked up short. She had a great frilled cap upon her funny little head and had a little stick in her hand from which hung two baskets filled with seeds. One of them was full of little gray seeds and the colors of the other were red and blue and golden. Rosie could not help thinking how pretty they were. The little old woman rapped Rosie smartly with her stick and then touched Georgie who opened his wide blue eyes with astonishment.

"My dears," said she in a little cracked voice, "here are some seeds. Which will you have? You are to go on a journey to-day and must have them to sow. These pretty ones will

spring up into thorns to hurt your feet, and these little gray ones will grow into soft mosses —”

Before she could pause, Rosie cried out:

“I want the pretty seeds, I will have the pretty seeds. Give them to me.”

And little Georgie, ever the gentlest, said:

“I will take the little gray seeds.”

Instantly the little old woman vanished and the children found themselves outside the garden gate with their chosen baskets in their hands.

“She said we must scatter them,” said Rosie, taking a handful of her seeds and casting them away. The wind bore them out of sight. Georgie also scattered his and they too vanished; but as the little ones went on Rosie’s path grew broad and rough and thorny, and she saw in terror that Georgie was going in a narrow way carpeted with soft and tender mosses. In vain she cried to him to go to her. In vain he strove to reach her side to comfort her; wider and wider their paths separated. Brighter and softer and fairer grew Georgie’s — rougher and more thorny grew poor Rosie’s until with weary bleeding feet and torn hands she sank among the briars weeping bitterly.

“O Godmother,” cried she, “I am sorry I would have my own way!”

She saw through her tears her little godmother in her path.

“Poor little child,” said she, “do you see now that little self-will and waywardness are very pretty seeds but bear bitter fruit. Choose to scatter little common seeds of gentleness and kindness and obedience and you will find only flowers in your path.”

“Why Rosie,” said her mamma, “what’s the matter? Have you been dreaming that you cried so hard?” And there was Rosie lying in her little white bed at home with the tears streaming down her face and dear little Georgie asleep beside her. Mamma was there too, and she said Rosie had been dreaming but Rosie knew better.

THE HERMIT OF AHWAHNA

FOREWORD

To the wonderful people of a wonderful State who, sitting among the ashes of their smitten city could yet, as one of their number said "count their blessings," pausing not to weep over losses; making no moan, but while the smoke of the great fires was still enveloping them, the explosions of falling walls still sounding in their ears, homeless, mourners many of them, penniless all of them for the time being, could, and did, proceed at once to rebuild better than before their beloved city. To these brave, cheerful, energetic and optimistic souls the admiration of the world; I dedicate this book.

THE AUTHOR.

January 28, 1914.

CHAPTER I

THE TOURISTS

Leaving the work-a-day lowlands and wandering into the heart of the mountains, we find a new world, and stand beside the majestic pines and firs and sequoias, silent and awestricken, as if in the presence of superior beings new arrived from some other star, so calm and bright and godlike they are.

JOHN.

The early dawn of an October day!

A tender mist, half-rose, half-gray, eastbounded the land. Tinted like the inside of a sea-shell, it slowly dawned, gradually deepening and brightening until the all-embracing mountain-tops glowed like amethysts. A few pallid stars still gleamed unconquered in the darkness of the western sky. In the distance the shadowy mountains through that rose-white mist seemed but shadows indeed. Foothills and valleys and the long slender road winding like a silver thread, in and out, seemed but the semblance of a dream.

Tall cedars, outlining the scene with the sombre foliage, stood erect and straight like sentinels guarding the land, and

the strange, mysterious silence which always precedes the dawning of a new day could almost be felt. Not a leaf stirred, nor a bird's wing. All nature seemed to hold its breath, waiting for that ever new wonder: the dawn of day, when, harsh and discordant, clearing the silence and rushing like an evil thing through the shadowy scene; tooting and rumbling and ringing, as it came like some old-time monster breathing fire and smoke, dragging its train behind it, rushed this creation of man's genius. Puffing and snorting and ringing its bell, it came to a standstill in front of the little platform which adorned the small eating house at Raymond; and in an instant all was hurry and bustle. Brighter and fairer grew the day. The tourists, eager for their morning meal, rushed for the restaurant, the Swiss gentleman in the van, with his butterfly net over his ample shoulder. It was not an inviting feast which awaited them. Two long tables standing at right angles and covered with sheeting which bore witness of many former meals; plates, cups and saucers set at regular intervals, huge platters of coarse bread, and cruet stands with vinegar and such condiments graced the center of the tables.

A lame and dirty Chinaman came limping in from a rear door, a pitcher of milk in one hand and a pot of coffee in the other. He was followed by a slatternly woman in a calico wrapper, minus half the buttons, who informed her guests that He was off on a toot and most likely wouldn't be back for a week.

The Swiss gentleman seized the pitcher of milk and, breaking a chunk of bread in it, began his repast. Those less fortunate contented themselves with black coffee and bread and when they grumbled the wrathful Son of the Orient suddenly snatched the table cloth and sent it with plates, cups and cruets crashing to the floor. Everybody sprang aside amazed and indignant, but the sweet and mellow call of a horn sent them rushing to the door, all annoyances forgotten, for it was the stage, it was indeed; and six half broken bronchos, each with a hostler at his head, were pitching and rearing and doing all sorts of horse stunts.

On the box sat Tom Kennedy; bluff, cheery, brown and red like an autumn leaf colored by wind and sun and storm of his

beloved mountains: the best driver and the most delightful of that lovely valley, for Tom had wintered and summered there for forty odd years, and as for driving — well, nobody could go nearer the edge of a curve and not slip off than Tom Kennedy, and it was one of the joys of his life to hear the Ohs! and Ahs! and feminine screams of his passengers as the stage grazed the edge at some dangerous turn or rushed pell-mell down some precipitous “pitch.”

Tom was calling now, “Aboard — Aboard, if you can’t get aboard, get a brick”; and the eager tourists, forgetful of that breakfast, laughing at the time-honored joke, made for the stage, good naturedly jostling each other in their haste. All were soon seated, two little boys beside Tom on the box. Tom cried, “Let her go, boys!” The six hostlers sprang away from the horses’ heads and heels, and away they dashed, rearing, pitching, kicking, bucking, backing, pulling, until it seemed as though Tom himself could not control them: but they did not know Tom. The ribbons were held firmly, the long whip curled and snapped and seemed never to strike anywhere. His “Steady Boys! Steady Boys!” appealed to their horse-sense and soon his “Bronchos” settled down to steady work and the sixty-mile stage ride was begun. At first, the sights of the mountain and wonderful forests kept eyes and ears busy. Every partridge running across the road, every bird whistling on a tree, every strange and gorgeous blossom by the roadside called for inspection and admiration, but as they began a steady climb up the mountain road our passengers began to take stock of each other. It was a cosmopolitan crowd. On the front seat sat Judge Moose, of Cincinnati — short, stocky, dark and with a merry gleam in his eye. A Jewish gentleman and his gentle little wife clad in brown like a wren. She had sweet and wistful eyes and was constantly appealed to by her husband to corroborate his statements. They had been around the world; had started, he said, with nine trunks and gradually reduced their baggage, shipping home the superfluous trunks until now a shawl-strap sufficed, and he was happy. “Henrietta must have the trunks,” he complained, “and we sent two back from London, two from Vienna, two from Rome and now we are blessed with this strap. Is it not so, Henrietta?”

There was a gentleman, wife and son, a lively boy of ten, from Michigan; and a pretty little widow from New York with her son; there were two brothers from New Jersey, photographers, who had been "saving up" for years to make the trip; and in the back seat a young man, wife and little daughter from London, England. The man was tall, slender, stooped as from too much bending over books, with a high, white and narrow forehead, singularly frail; thin curling brown hair rather long, piercing black eyes with a sparkle in their depths; an oval face with tremulous lips, and long, white, slender, sinuous hands. He would have been noticeable anywhere. A settled air of melancholy seemed to brood over him. He seldom smiled and only when he answered some gay sally of his wife — and she, she was but a girl. Her pretty rounded arms and neck revealed themselves through the gray net of her waist. She had the purple violet eyes and long dark curling lashes of the Celtic race. Her pretty mouth was constantly wreathing in smiles. She was like a summer breeze, a sparkling waterfall, the breath of a tea rose. Everything bright and sweet and intangible, full of vitality and life. Her light golden, fluffy hair rolled back in waves from her low, broad, white brow and gleamed under the brim of the little gray hat with a yellow-hammer's wing. Her sweet and mellow voice, speaking, laughing, singing gay little snatches, was a joy to hear. She threw back the Judge's witticisms with apt repartee, before the rest of the party had "caught on." She sang cradle songs to the solemn-faced little daughter resting in her arms, or improvised for her wonderful fairy stories (to which everybody listened) of mountain, cave and stream as they drove on. She revelled in the wonders of the road, the purple mists on the distant mountain-tops; the verdure of the valleys, the merry waterfalls; and as they slowly climbed up and up and ever up the winding mountain road, she felt no discomfort. The intense heat of noonday as they advanced, the billows of stifling dust, the rough stony road that moved more than one to complaint, did not exist for her. Her husband watched her fearfully as though he feared that she would suddenly vanish from his sight, and the solemn little girl with all of her mother's beauty and her father's more sedate manner — how she loved that fairy mother!

As the sun was setting, bathing the mountain-tops in a golden glory, and the valleys were in a lovely, hazy shadow, the stage reached Wawma.

A well-earned and enjoyed night's rest, and then they were off again. Fresh horses taxed Tom's powers of management; the air was more rarefied, pure and fresh as a cup of mountain spring water — and on all sides grew wonderful thickets and clusters and blankets of flowers.

Through this day the tourists began to individualize, and names were exchanged; little snatches of personal history given. The Swiss gentleman was a doctor and had a sanitarium in the Alps somewhere. Bugs and butterflies were his hobby. The Michigan family belonged to a wealthy lumberman, and the London family registered at Wawma as David Campbell and wife and child, Linden. The fairylike little wife was soon en rapport with the passengers. She chattered incessantly and innocently of their life, freely; like a child she told of their troubles and joys.

"You see," she said, "I am an American girl and was born in Ohio — such a beautiful State it is. The first that I can remember were the great locust trees in full bloom around our home. I can almost smell them now. They were so sweet, and we had two great dogs — but in a little while we left the home and Mother used to take me with her where she went to work at anything and everything. We never stayed in one place long and sometimes at night she would wake me, bundle me up and away we would go. We seemed always to be in hiding or running away. She never let me out of her sight. As I grew older, I knew, I don't know how, that she was afraid my father would steal me from her. She never spoke of him, and I never knew any more about him than that he was something to run away from. I gathered somewhere the idea that he was Irish and had been a singer and actor, but never knew whether it was true. One day in Chicago, Mother was at work in a hotel and I was singing. A gentleman heard me. He called my mother and told her that I could earn more in a week than she could in a year if she would let him train my voice. He said she could always stay with me. That was the beginning of my stage life. Together we traveled all over the States.

Sometimes playing and singing in small towns, sometimes in large cities. I always liked the one-night jumps. There was such hurry and bustle and excitement. I never did get tired, but my poor mother did. Finally our manager took his company to London and our misfortunes began. We didn't make the hit that he expected to make, and one night we went to the theatre to find it dark. He had taken all the receipts and skipped. Mother's health, never very rugged, began to fail and we had no money. Pretty soon we were living in one room, high up, and I was singing anywhere that I could, mostly in cafés — and Mother could no longer go out with me, then my good angel — and she glanced tenderly at her husband — “came. Davie was preaching and working nights in the slums. He had come from Edinburgh, and one dark night as he stood at the door of the café he heard me singing. ‘Such a little girl,’ he afterwards told me, ‘to be in such a place.’ That was the beginning of his caring for me. After that he always saw me home and he made life more comfortable for Mother, and when she died” — she choked a little — “he promised Mother to take care of me, and he has —”

“And,” interjected the Judge, “he has his reward with him.”

“Marion,” said her husband, “don't say any more — you've said enough.”

“Oh, yes I shall,” she replied wilfully, “I want everybody to know how good you are. You see Davie's father is an awfully strict Presbyterian and is an elder in a Scotch church. They all scrimped and saved to send Dave to college and he prepared for the ministry. He was very much in earnest and took a solemn oath never to marry, as it might interfere with his work — but when my mother died and I was all alone in the great city, there was only one way that he could take care of me and that was to marry me. Maybe,” — she glanced saucily from under her long lashes at her husband — “he wanted to anyway.”

“Right enough too,” boomed the great voice of the Swiss gentleman, “I would have done that also!”

“Yes!” said Marion, “I always tell him that my God would be proud of him, but you see Davie feels that he broke his vow

to his God and he is always looking for some ample punishment to fall on us."

"Marion, Marion," reproved her husband, "don't say any more," and Marion womanlike, having said all she had to say, subsided.

It was high noon when Tom Kennedy stopped his horses on the top of Prospect mountain, six thousand feet above the sea level and every one, even the playful boys, silently and awefully, gazed at the magnificent panorama spread before them.

Surrounded by rugged mountain peaks, snowclad; looking down and down into the vividly green valley, through which like a silver thread winding in and out ran the Merced River. Great trees looked like bushes, and the Valley Inn like a doll's house. From rock to rock flashed mistlike waterfalls, golden in the sunshine, slender now, for it was October, but falling a thousand feet. The blue sky arching like a dome overhead, and flowers yellow and red and purple under foot. No one spoke. Finally Tom touched up the new horses, chirruped to them all and began the descent into the valley, dashing recklessly over the rocky road; rounding the most dangerous curves with scarce an inch to spare, to the great delight of the boys, Howard and 'Gene, and finally with a joyful winding of the horn and rush of the horses (Tom always came in on a run), the stage drew up at Valley Inn. Susan McKinley, fair, plump and hospitable, followed by her husband John, tall, gray and dreamy (somehow John always followed Susan) were standing on the porch to welcome their new guests to Valley Inn.

CHAPTER II

THE VALLEY INN

At the door stood a Chinese boy clothed in Oriental garb, his long black queue swinging picturesquely down his back. With a large whisk broom he brushed off the layers of dust before the travellers could enter the spotless precincts of a large and cheerful room which greeted their tired eyes through the open door. At one end of it stood the office desk neatly railed off, and at the other a large open fireplace in which glowed

and sputtered and flamed a welcoming blaze, one "front-log-back log and filler," for the air was growing chilly.

"Come right along in," urged Susan. "It's right cold outside, and I guess you must be tired from your long ride and — Oh, there's a baby, a blessed baby, I don't know when one has come this way before, not this whole year — My dearie, my dearie —" She gathered the little one to her ample bosom and led the way still talking. "Come on in, Tom, and get something warming. I'll warrant me you've been telling some of your dreadful yarns and have scared these boys 'most to death. Don't you believe him, lads; there's not a word of truth."

"Ah, now, Susan, you know better. All's gospel truth that I'm tellin' them about this blessed valley. I never told a lie in my life. Can you put me up, Susan, for a day and a night?"

"Surely, Tom, I can, and I'll go this very minute and tell Mandy —"

"Well, I'll go and tend to my bronchos and then come in. I never trust my beasts to any hostlers. They will skimp them on their oatmeal water or not rub them down or do some other cheatin' job. Come on, boys, you'll like to see the bronchs in their native state. They don't like harness one little bit, and look at 'em now — See Bess biting Ted's ear — she's saying: 'Just you wait, Ted, till I get you in the corral and you'll get one good kick —' She always does what she says, too, does Bess, but I kind of like the old girl; she's full of ginger — You can see 'em turned out, and then run back to the house. I've some business to attend to."

Tom went around to the barn and saw to his horses, a work that he never delegated to another, and then wended his way around the back of the house where the ample door of the kitchen stood wide open. Resting a moment before "dishing up" stood Mandy — tall, gaunt, angular, with little, deep-set, brown eyes and large ears that stood out comically, brown hair drawn straight back from her narrow forehead and done up in a tight little knot at the back of her head; her sleeves were rolled up revealing muscular and bony arms, and her spotless gingham and ruffled white apron, apparently donned that moment, at once marked her as a capable New England product as indeed she was. She had come to the Valley Inn in Nephew Job's time.

She wore at that time a brown suit which seemed to hang on rather than fit her angular frame, and she carried a handbox in which was her best hat. Her feet in broad, low-heeled boots were more adapted for use than beauty, and yet Mandy, neat and precise, with a snap in her eyes and in her speech, was a pleasant woman. She was like a russet apple — not much to look at perhaps, but sweet and sound at the core. She was appalled at the shiftless ways and extravagant mismanagement of Job's incompetent and pretty wife. She had not been in the house two days before she had explored the kitchen, the pantry and the shed. She reported to Job the, to her, terrible state of things, the waste and idleness going on. "Ca'llate you're here to make money, ain't you? Well, you'll never get along a mite if you don't get busy and run that kitchen better. Them boys will throw out with a teaspoon mor'n you can bring in with a spade."

"I know that's about so," agreed Job, "but what's a man to do? I can't run the office and the kitchen both, and Erminie don't like to housekeep over much."

"I'll tell you what's in my mind," interrupted Mandy; "since Mother died, I haven't anybody belonging to me and one place is the same as another — if agreeable to you I'll stay and run that kitchen for a fair wage. I ain't a mite afraid but I'll save my wages out of that waste and leave you something besides. I'm neat and thrifty and I can't abide shiftless ways."

Mandy stayed and at once became a necessary adjunct to the Valley Inn. The tables were decked in spotless linen, the meals were nicely cooked and quickly served, always piping hot. San Lee and Che-Sang learned very soon that wasteful ways were not her ways and that fantan and other games under the sheltering trees could only be tolerated out of work hours. Mandy "couldn't abide" their pigtails and loose garments, but she soon learned to depend upon their good qualities, and it was owing to her management that the Valley Inn was so largely patronized by tourists, and when Nephew Job "quit his job," as he expressed it, Mandy stayed on, and was Susan's right hand. She loved the mountains and the "pitches" which reminded her of her own New Hampshire, though she could never be made to confess that El Capitan was quite so fine as Mount Washington.

Tom came towards her, meditatingly chewing a straw.

"How-dee, Mandy" he ventured a little bashfully.

"How do you do, Tom — I ca'llate you've had a good trip. You're in on time."

"Yes, that's so, just in time — and — say, Mandy, have you made up your mind yet? I've done right smart at waitin'."

"You can always stop waitin'," in crisp tones.

"I do' 'no's I can — When I want a thing I'm pretty apt to stick at it till I get it and —"

"Get out of here, Tom Kennedy, with your wantin' a thing. I reckon I'm not that thing you're wantin'."

"Oh, I say now, Mandy, I didn't mean —"

"Get along with you, Tom Kennedy. I've got to dish up this dinner — thing, indeed!"

Tom beat a retreat, as he had frequently done before. He had liked Mandy from the start and all the more perhaps because, like his "bronchs," she was difficult to manage, and seldom did he appear without seeking her out and "putting the question," always to be routed and flouted as in the present instance. "I allas," thought poor Tom, "seem to hit on the wrong word with Mandy."

A most welcome dinner, hot and toothsome, was dispatched by the travellers, and then one by one they sought their rooms for a needed rest, nor could the delightful murmur of the river almost at their doors, nor the sighing of the pines, lure them from their rest. Night descended like a discarded mantle of the day, the skies blossomed into the wonderful brilliancy, the new morn hung like a golden sickle in the heavens and the night birds and insects began their songs and serenades, and then by twos and threes the tourists came out on to the broad porch. They were rested and eager to enjoy the crisp evening air. As for the boys, they had already raced half over the valley, had climbed a tree, had caught and ridden old Zeb, the family burro, to his great displeasure, and, wonder of wonders, had caught a little owl. The Swiss gentleman was greatly interested and extolled the scenery. "Not in my country," said he, "not in my Switzerland is there more beauty, more grandeur or greater mountains than here in the cup of your hand."

Afraid to wander far, led by John McKinley, who conversed in his quiet way as they walked, they saw the valley at night and then, scarcely rested yet, all went to their clean and cozy rooms. But the early dawn saw everybody alert and eager for the day's pleasure. The boys chased each other along the bank of the river and the older guests stood upon the porch, in silence, watching the rising of the sun over the mountains. It was a glorious sight, not to be portrayed by pen or pencil — that wonderful golden glow softly enveloping the snow-crowned mountains, the slowly receding shadows in the valley, the sweet and gentle breeze playing among the pine trees as they made their perpetual moan; the singing of the Merced River as it wandered through the vivid green of the valley and glowed under the fringe of willows; and the gigantic pines and oaks, the graceful hemlocks and cedars which framed the picture. John McKinley was a student rather than a landlord and he was now in his element. He pointed out the mountains and named them, Glacier Point, Half Dome, El Capitan, and told them of the trees, of the Falls — now running slenderly because the season was late; he volunteered to pilot them to Mirror Lake after breakfast, and Bridal Veil Falls, and from him they gathered much of the history and legends of Ahwahna and of the Ahwahnachee — that small and fast-diminishing band of Indians, native to the valley, and who even now were encamped in the valley of the Yosemite, gathering pine nuts and grasshoppers and berries for their winter storage. All that long and delightful day they wandered, some on horseback, more on foot, up and down the hills, gathering flowers by the waters, watching the birds flitting from branch to branch, standing silently before the great and wonderful mountains which surrounded them and when night fell, a weary but happy crowd, they gathered once more in the living room of the Inn and sat around the crackling fire John McKinley, in his gentle voice, told them stories and legends of Ahwahna. They heard the screams of a wild-cat, and the hooting of the owls, and when the stars came out and the young moon rode high in the heavens Marion Campbell went to the little piano (it had been brought into the valley piecemeal by Nephew Job) and softly touching the keys began to sing, in her beautiful and sympathetic voice,

“Lord, keep us safe this night,
Secure from all our fears
May Angels guard us while we sleep
Till morning light appears.”

CHAPTER III

THE TRAGEDY

The winding of the horn and Tom's loud and cheery, “Hallo! Hallo!” called out the tourists to a continuation of their journey — and all responded except the family from London. Little Marion was ill; all night she had tossed in feverish restlessness and now like a little waxen image, spent with fever, was lying in her mother's arms. They decided to remain at the Inn until she was better. David Campbell, more melancholy than ever, hung over mother and child in speechless agony. To him every misfortune seemed the hand of the Almighty striking him in punishment, and his cloud had no silver lining. Sitting by the fire, her baby in her arms, the child's mother made a pretty picture. She talked baby nothings into the listless ears and sang, in her marvelous voice, a little lullaby with which her own mother in the troubled times of her early life had soothed her to sleep.

Sleep, sleep while billows creep
Over the slumberous sands;
And every breeze
Blesses the trees
With trembling, shadowy hands.
Birds in their nests,
With heads in their breasts,
Murmur a lullaby;
And the bright river gleams
In its silver streams
Under the stars of the sky.

Sleep, sleep, dearest one, sleep!
Lying on Mother's breast:
Safe, safe thy angel will keep
Thee in thy innocent rest.

Susan McKinley came and stood by mother and child, silently looking at the little one, “Somehow she makes me think of the little one that we lost,” said she, “though she ain't really

a mite like her, but she has some of her pretty ways. We buried her under the pines at the old home in Ohio, and the home was never the same after she went out of it. And when Nephew Job McKinley, who used to own this place, got scared out by an earthquake, father said, 'Let's go and take it, perhaps we'll be more contented there,' and so we came, and Nephew Job went to San Francisco — where he could get the earthquakes at first hand. I always thought Nephew Job was fore-handed. Well we came and settled down, but I don't see as I feel any more satisfied at losing 'Sweetheart.'

"That's her little chair by the fire; and when I'm sitting here alone and all is quiet I seem to see her sitting in it, her little hands holding on to the arms of the chair and she rocking-rocking and laughing up in my face as she used to do. So many people have children that they don't want it does seem as if the Lord might have left us our only one."

"Susan dear," gently said John, "perhaps He'll give her back to us some day, and she's better off. She'll never grieve for us as we have for her."

Susan wiped her eyes and began straightening the rugs. She did not look at John, but well she knew that John's eyes were also full of tears. There was no physician in the valley, but John McKinley was no mean substitute. He had studied medicine in his early manhood, though he had never matriculated, and now he kept on hand a small store of drugs for the benefit of his family, visitors, Indians or any one in need of help. Many an Indian mother brought her bright eyed little papoose in its beautiful beaded cradle to be cured of some baby ailment by the white doctor; and even the haughty chieftains did not disdain now and then to appear and demand that he cure them. Stray miners and lumbermen found here always a remedy for rheumatism and other ills generously handed out, and Susan's cheery voice and hearty meals generally completed the cure.

After the stage had gone, bearing with it the pleasant companions of their journey — never, alas! to re-assemble again on this earth — after the good-bys had been said and the little group left standing on the porch still listened to the rumbling of the wheels against the rocky road in the distance, an unaccountable sadness came over them. They could still hear the

gay laughter and voices of that happy party on their way to the "Big Trees," and it was as though they had indeed parted company not alone with these gay companions but with joy itself. Silently they turned and re-entered the house. The little girl, wrapped in a white woolen shawl, was lying on the lounge, her eyes unnaturally bright, cheeks flushed with fever and her slender little hands clasping and unclasping each other in restlessness. She babbled continually of little pleasures that she had enjoyed; the pony that she had been permitted to ride, the boat on the water and the lilies she herself had gathered; of the dear doll "Arabella" shut up in the trunk, and most and oftenest of the dear mama who bent tenderly over her — bidding her not to let her go — to hold her fast, until soothed by the constant sponging of the little fevered face and hands, she dropped into a troubled sleep. Susan sat by her, gently patting her in her soft motherly way, and every hour the child grew dearer to her and seemed more and more like the little Sweetheart laid to rest under the pines of her old home so long ago.

There was also a guest in the house — Gilbert Lee, a young man working his way through college, and during vacations he came to the valley to photograph and paint the wonderful scenes around him, these pictures to be disposed of later. He was a fair-faced, honest young fellow and a great favorite of the McKinleys, and each vacation found him back with them, occupying always the same little room and cheerfully assisting them in entertaining their guests. He was greatly attracted by the beauty of the little sick child and volunteered to sit by her, which he often did, thus giving her parents a needed rest.

The days passed wearily to them all. Coach loads of sight-seers invaded the Inn and left "for pastures new"; day succeeded day and still the sick child babbled in delirium and did not know even her adored mother.

"Typhoid fever," said John McKinley. "It must run its course. You'll have to make up your minds to stay a month. It'll be twenty-one days before she's better, though. I think she'll pull through, but after that she's going to be weak and not able to be moved for some time."

With this assurance they watched and hoped. Susan relieved them when she could, and young Gilbert took his turn,

and then David and his wife would steal out for an hour's rest and walk in the valley, along the banks of the Merced, singing its song under the willows, or on the winding road until they stood upon the banks of that most beautiful lake of the mountains wherein every tree and shrub, mountain-peak, and star in the heavens smiled back from its clear water. One night the moon was full and stars in all their wonderful brilliancy studded the sky, cumulus clouds floated above the mountain heights in seried ranks, and were duplicated in the clear water. In silence David and his wife stood looking at the images reflected there. All day he had been more than usually melancholy, some premonition of coming disaster was strongly impressed upon his mind. Marion thought that he was worrying about the little Marion and strove to cheer him. As they stood under the branching shade of a willow they heard the scream of a wild-cat in the distance, almost at once it was answered by a cry which seemed to be overhead, like the cry of a child in distress. Startled, both looked up, and swift as an avenging spirit something sprang from the branches and fastened its fangs in Marion's throat; his claws tore the laces of her waist and his terrible form crushed her fainting to the earth. David, wild with fear, saw the creature as he sprang, and instantly flew empty-handed to the rescue of his wife. His slender sinewy hands closed about the throat of the beast, and squirming, writhing, twisting, struggling, with snarls and incoherent cries, man and beast fought for the mastery. Little by little those strong and desperate hands did their work. The cat ceased to snarl; with eyeballs protruding from the sockets and its black and swollen tongue hanging from the terrible open mouth, he released his cruel hold and faintly struggled for freedom. Not until the last gasp did David relax his hold, and then, flinging the dead creature from him, he seized his fainting wife in his arms; tore away the blood-stained laces from her bosom; felt in vain for the beating of her heart. Too late, too late! Like a broken lily she rested in his arms, and he knew that she was gone. Gently, then, he laid the little body on the ground and with a great and sudden cry, not less savage than that of the beast he had strangled, David Campbell fled up the mountain pass — up — up and away anywhere — anywhere

from the sight of that horrible place, crying aloud as he ran, "The vengeance of Almighty God — the Judgment of the Lord! It has fallen! It has fallen!"

On and on through the darkness of the night he fled, fearless alike of man or beast or the thick darkness which encircled him. Up — up into the mountain fastnesses — obsessed by that one idea that God's vengeance in its most cruel form had overtaken him — that for his broken oath he was now being fearfully punished, David ran, leaving Marion and her beastly murderer lying in the dewy grass side by side.

CHAPTER IV

LITTLE MARION'S NEW HOME

In the early dawn Gilbert Lee found them there — the pitiful little figure of the child-wife and the savage beast whose cruel fangs had done her to death. John McKinley and Tom Kennedy, who chanced to be at the Inn, and Gilbert brought the little body home and arranged for an inquest if it could be had, and searching parties to go out at once in search of the missing man. There was no question as to how Marion Campbell had been killed. The torn and bleeding throat and breast, and the strangled cat told the terrible tale. They buried her in the little burial plot, fenced in, beside the river. Susan had arrayed her in a pretty, soft, dove-colored silk gown which she took from her suit-case, and John McKinley read the beautiful burial service of the Episcopal Church. Mourners there were none, excepting those four, but the birds sang in the bushes and the leaves fell gently and drifted over the new-made grave. For several days the men, resident or touring the valley, searched for the missing husband, but the searchers were few, and none of them had much spare time, so finally it was abandoned. It was surmised that he had fled to the mountains in frenzy — his steps were trailed for many miles — and that up in the desolate mountain, a mountain lion or bear had killed him.

At home Susan attended the little Marion, now doubly orphaned, with ceaseless care, and was rewarded after many weeks by the child dropping into a quiet and refreshing sleep. When she awoke, she opened her eyes and asked at once for

"Mama." Joyfully that good woman cuddled her to her warm heart, comforted and fed her, and every day saw her regaining her lost strength.

One night Susan and her husband were sitting before the open fireplace. The house was almost empty of tourists, as it was getting late in the season for them. Gilbert Lee had returned to his college, and the little Marion had that day been allowed to sit up in the living room. She had now been tenderly tucked in her little bed, and Susan had listened to her childish prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep," ending with, "God bless papa and mama," for she had not been told of the awful tragedy which had robbed her of both parents, and Susan had returned to her seat by the fire.

As they sat, the same thoughts were in the minds of each. At length Susan voiced them. "John, what shall we do with her? Do you know who she is?"

"I know nothing but the name in the register. I guess he had all his money and tickets and letters in his pockets when he went out that night."

"Have you examined the baggage?"

"Yes, but there's nothing there, only clothes — nice, comfortable ones, but nothing very fine and a Bible in Mr. Campbell's suit-case with his name in it."

"She may have relations."

"It's more than likely — but how can we find them?"

"I don't know, from what the poor little wife said she was an only child, her mother was dead and her father, if he is alive, of no account — and Mr. Campbell was an only son — he in some way offended his father and the father shut the door in his face. That's all I know and it's all we are likely to find out," replied Susan. "John, John, can't we keep the baby? More and more she reminds me of our little Sweetheart, and it seems to me that God, seeing how lonesome we were, has given her to us."

John patted the plump hand laid upon his knee to emphasize her pleading and smiled gently at her. "Surely, surely little woman, if we can, but we must first find out if she has any of her own people. I'll advertise in the city and if no one claims her, Susan, my dear, she's ours."

So it was settled. Advertisements inserted from time to time brought no response, and soon the little Marion recalled her parents only as a dream. She recollected her ride into the valley, the Swiss gentleman with the butterfly net jumping out of the stage every little while and jabbing the air for butterflies which he never caught; the boys who laughed at her and called her "Fluffy"; Tom Kennedy with his jolly laugh; and, like a lovely dream, she recalled her mother as she nestled in her arms and her voice as she sang, "Sleep, sleep, baby, sleep." And never in all her life did she forget that cradle song, but as the days and weeks and months and years passed in the tender care of Father and Mother McKinley all of these childish memories faded into dreams. She was never told of her past life, as it might sadden her.

Tourist season and winter were her divisions of time. In the late autumn, when a few stray flakes of snow began to drift down upon the still flowery meadows and the dancing waters of the waterfalls, father began to lay in his wood, to call in his stock, horses, cows and sheep and safely house them and to get in provisions enough to stand a siege, for well he knew those tiny flakes were but the advance guard of that great army of the snow which would soon blockade their home. Soon the flakes grew larger; thicker and thicker they fell and clung to spruce and cedar and fir tree, until the land was fairy-land, and the encircling mountains gleamed silver white against the cold blue sky. Then it snowed, ceaselessly, silently, until roads and fences and all landmarks were obliterated. The doors and windows were blocked, fifteen feet on a level and thirty, forty, fifty in drifts — and winter had come.

This was the liveliest time of the year for little Marion — sitting in Sweetheart's little chair, watching the rosy apples roasting before the fire, and the mince pie warming for father; listening to Susan's thricetold tales of her own youth in the far-away land of the Ohio. Her little hand clasped tenderly in Susan's own, was joy indeed. She loved to hear of the brave French mother who emigrated to what was then a wild land, who with five children of her own found room for four more of her dead sister's; of the pranks of that gay crowd of youngsters gathered in the little log cabin under the three great locust

trees which flowered so sweetly every summer — of the crystal spring under the hill lined with maiden-hair ferns, and the cool milk-house where great pans of milk sat on the pebbly bottom of the run, and the clear spring water ever running kept them cool. She loved to hear of the great belt of pine trees which grew near by and where the cardinals — Susan called them red-birds — built their nests and reared their young.

And Susan had a quaint humor about her. She told once of the children being left at home when their parents started for the city. Old Dobbin was harnessed to the spring wagon, Mother was already in the front seat when Daddy turned and as a last caution said, "Children, don't you touch that whiskey on the top shelf." They never had dreamed of doing that, Susan said, but towards evening, tired of play, Elias climbed on a chair and brought down the forbidden whiskey. "Let's," said he. "Let's," said Katharine, abettor in every mischief. Some water was heated at the open fire — some sugar purloined and a lemon. Elias knew exactly how Daddy mixed his toddy, for had he not often watched him and longed for a taste of the delightful smelling mixture, and here was his opportunity — not neglected by any means. Every child had his or her glass — they tasted — tasted again and fell. They sang and danced and hallooed and by and by began to quarrel. Then they got sleepy and, finished Susan, "If you'll believe me, Sweetheart, when Mammy and Daddy got home they found the whole nine of us asleep on the floor and that whiskey bottle was empty."

So Sweetheart grew to be the other sweetheart in their father's and mother's love, and the little chair was no longer vacant, and the little Marion had found her home.

CHAPTER V

DAVID CAMPBELL'S AWAKENING

When David Campbell opened his eyes he found himself lying in a cleft of the mountain-side. He rose stiffly from his cramped position and stumbled to his feet. He looked about him in a dazed manner as in a dream. In his headlong flight he had gone far and high beyond the valley, and exhausted at length had

sunk into a long and dreamless sleep, and this was the awakening. He was cold and hungry and thirsty. Of those sensations he was conscious, but apart from that he might have been the primitive man. His hair was as white as snow, and a stubby beard adorned his face. How long he had lain in that unconscious sleep he did not know. He was as a man newly born into a world which he had never seen. Of the past, its sorrow, its joys, its tragedy, he remembered absolutely nothing; it was as though it had not been, even language seemed to have been forgotten and he spoke no words. Instinctively he looked about him, trying to gratify his physical needs, thirst and hunger.

A tiny thread of a waterfall gurgled and danced among the bracken near by. He stooped, made a cup of his hand and drank greedily — and as he stooped his eye ranged the valley below and he saw the beautiful sight of an Indian village. Their o'chums made of poles and thatched with incense cedar were planted at irregular intervals through the valley. It was the harvest season, and the Indians gathered in families from far and near were encamped here to gather and store their winter food — black oak acorns, pine nuts, manzanita berries, grasshoppers, worms, fish and small game. Bucks, squaws and children were seen at work, even the dogs were made useful in treeing wild cats, and trailing mountain lions. It was a cheerful and busy scene. Half a dozen fires were burning, sending their straight columns of flame up in the still air, guarded by half a dozen Indian boys. Squaws, in their picturesque costumes, were pounding acorns in their stone ollas with their metats, and their papooses rocked and swung from branches near by in their Indian cradles. Others were warming water in their cooking baskets to mix in their meal, and the bucks were gathering great baskets of nuts for winter storage, and building their chuck'-ahs or storehouses covered with pine branches, points out, to ward off mice and squirrels.

The odor of the cooking meal seemed to assail David's nostrils; hunger asserted itself. He at once began to descend to the valley, slipping, grasping branches or rocks, sliding, gaining another foothold, rounding some almost impossible cliff, still persevering, until at length, wearied and faint, he reached the camp and walked directly towards one of the fires. Im-

passively the Indians watched him, asking no questions, apparently not observing this strange visitor, but in reality very alert. His snow-white hair framing his young face and his gleaming black eyes seemed to them supernatural. He did not speak but eyed hungrily the acorn cakes being baked for the morning meal. A pretty squaw who bore the musical name Ah-wei'-ha (Quiet Water) offered him a cup of manzanita cider, and he drank it eagerly. He took a cake from the burning coals and devoured it greedily. As-wei'-ha watched him silently. One of the chiefs came up, and she pointed significantly to the snow-white hair, and said in their own tongue, "The White God." Superstitious as all tribes living among Nature's surroundings are, the chieftain was impressed. Taking the man's hand he led him to a nearby o'chum, lifted the flap and bade him welcome. Thus was David Campbell adopted into the Yosemite tribe. Gradually he adopted their customs. Ah-wei'-ha gave him a deer-skin shirt and leggings with beautifully beaded moccasins, and he abandoned his own apparel in its favor. He made weirs for the fish, and learned to shoot small game with the bow and arrow. He helped to trap grasshoppers by digging a pit in the center of the meadow and armed with small bushes assisted the Indians in driving them into it. The squaws then kindled a fire over them and when they were well roasted they were ready for storage. All through that beautiful Indian summer David lived and worked with his new-formed friends. He learned something of their language and was especially kind and gentle with the little black-eyed children. He wintered with them in the o'chum and learned the art of tipping arrows from the old men. When the deep snows came and they were shut off from the outside world, David would sketch wonderful designs on the dressed deer skins for the squaws to embroider in their colored porcupine quills or weave in their many-colored blankets.

Among themselves they talked and said that he was the White God, To-tau-kon-nu'-la, re-incarnated and they gave him of their best, trusting that when the time came for him to leave them and return to the Great Spirit, as leave them he certainly would he would ask the Great Spirit's blessing upon them, and indeed it did seem that the acorns were more plentiful

that season, the weather more delightful, and the fish crowded the river as never before.

When spring came, that most beautiful season in God's most beautiful valley, when the snows began to melt and the rivers and falls to gurgle and sing their noble songs; when the robins, and blue birds and orioles made the early morning gay with songs; and the dogwood and syringa and manzanita in full and abundant flowering lighted up the sombre forests, and the snow-white azalia thickets in sheets of rosy snow bloomed in the valley — and along the streams large eyed violets, wild cyclamen and early mountain lilies, made fair the land — David, who had seemed so quietly contented, grew restless. When the Indians moved their camp farther up the mountains he made long and longer journeys away, sometimes being absent for several days and nights. At such times Ah-wei'-ha would lift her eyes towards El Capitan and say, "Soon, soon the White God goes as To-tan-kon-nu'-la went." In one of his wanderings he came upon an abandoned cabin — set in a little oasis of verdure. Around it flowed a little mountain streamlet, enclosing four or five acres, and at its back the foothills barricaded it. Actuated, perhaps, by some memory of his former civilized life, subconsciously, he made this little cabin his home, gradually gathering about and in it such necessities as were needful. Ah-wei'-ha, who had from his first coming among them assumed a special care over him, soon discovered his abode, and made frequent journeys to insure his comfort. The finest of dressed skins were spread upon his couch; the chief's blankets, and finest baskets were brought to him, gifts from the Ahwanachee. She it was who encouraged him to hunt in the mountains, dressed and sold the skins of the animals he killed and bought him implements to cultivate his little garden. Even to her, David seldom spoke, and when he did it was in her own tongue. With infinite pains he constructed a suspension bridge over the little stream which he could raise and lower at pleasure. Here he made his home, dug in his garden, planted his seeds and here alone and unmolested he continued to live. Squirrels chattered on his cabin roof, ran up and down his arms and searched for corn. Birds of many kinds came at his call for food. A little mountain goat which he had found deserted by its mother,

brought in, warmed and fed, was his companion. His greatest happiness was in wandering through the woodlands — lying at full length on the broad tableland of some lofty mountain and looking at the wonderful scenery spread out beneath him. Often at night when the moon was full he would climb some nearby peak and his rich beautiful voice could be heard in some wordless song, wordless but full of melody as it echoed and re-echoed through the glades. At such times the Indians, listening awesomely to the music of his voice, would stand in awe and whisper, “The White God holds communion with the Great Spirit.”

CHAPTER VI

LIFE IN THE VALLEY

Years passed in the beautiful valley of Ahwahna. Springs came with sound of tinkling waterfalls, the voices of birds, the perfume of flowers; summers succeeded with their ripening grain and fruit and berries. Then came autumn, when the black oak cast its fruitful acorns, and the red pine its nourishing cones; and then the white winters, when all nature slept under its coverlid of snow until another resurrection; and little Sweetheart of Valley Inn grew and flourished like the outdoor flowers.

Never will she forget that most wonderful day when she was ten years old. It was early dawn and early spring when she heard Tom Kennedy’s well-known shrill whistle. She ran down to the porch to welcome him. Father and Mother McKinley were already there. and Tom — Tom, with something standing beside him — Sweetheart’s birthday gift — a darling little round roly-poly of a Pinto — spotted red and white, broad between the eyes which looked at her now with such a friendly look; broad of chest and standing upon his four sturdy little legs with his bridle over his head. He was accoutred in a beautiful Mexican saddle and bridle, and a fine Indian saddle-cloth embroidered in porcupine quills. Such a pony! Sweetheart gave a scream of delight.

“Tom! Tom! Is he for me? — for my very own? Oh, don’t say it if it isn’t true or you’ll break my heart.”

“He’s yours for sure, Sweetheart. I’ve gentled him for you

this winter, and Father and Mother bought the bridle and fancy fixin's — Come here, Dandy, and shake hands. Here's your new mistress."

The intelligent little creature obediently gave his right fore foot to be shaken by the child — then his left.

"Kneel, Dandy."

With both fore feet doubled awkwardly enough under him, Dandy knelt — rolled over, went to sleep — sat up, and finally kissed his master affectionately, putting his fore feet on Tom's shoulder and nozzling him. Tom patted him, let him find the sugar hidden in his coat pocket and then said, "That'll do, Dandy; and now, Sweetheart, you must learn to ride."

"Oh, Tom! Tom!" Marion threw her arms about his neck and rapturously kissed him, to his great embarrassment; then Father and Mother were embraced and lastly Dandy himself, who endured the embraces for the sugar so lavishly conferred upon him.

Then began a new life for Marion and for John McKinley as well. Together, John walking by her side, they traversed the valleys and the hills; from John she learned the flora and fauna of that wonderful region which she called home. She soon knew the call of every bird, the track of every beast, and flowers and shrubs and trees became to her an open book. Through the green and pleasant glades under the Big Trees they often lingered, returning when the stars came out, laden with flowers and nuts in their season. Susan, ever kind, patiently assumed the burden of their neglected duties and welcomed these children of the wild, when they came, having always some dainty reserved for their suppers.

When the Indians were encamped in the little valley gathering their winter stores of nuts and cones, fish and game, Marion and her father would then spend a happy day among them. One winter the squaws made a dress of tanned doe-skin for the little girl — beautifully embroidered in colored porcupine quills and beads, and fringed. Marion was fond of wearing this suit and always put it on when she visited her Indian friends, her long and abundant hair, like corn silk, hanging in two braids to her waist, a little beaded toque upon her head. She early learned the simple words of their language, and her

father loved to sit by their camp fire and coax from their reticent old men the legends of the valley: how Tis-sa'-ack, that great woman magician, came from the West and taught their women to weave the pretty baskets which they still weave; how To-tau-kon-nu'-la, their mighty chieftan, built her a great "O'chum" upon the highest mountain — how he loved her with a great and absorbing love, and how she refused his offer. "I go to my people," she cried and vanished from his sight; how the love-lorn chief for love of her forgot his people and sought her for many, many moons in many lands. Then it was that calamity came to the Ahwa-na-chee. Drought came, crops failed, deer wandered away and all the streams dried up. A dreadful darkness fell upon them; the earth trembled and rolled mightily; thunders boomed and lightnings cleft the skies in two. The great dome Tis-sa'-ac rose in the air, burst asunder and half of it fell into the valley; fire sprang from the ground and the streams burst their bounds. Then it was that a strange and marvelous thing happened. Up in the midst of the valley gurgled and bubbled a spring of living water, clear as a diamond, cold as ice, fresh from the hand of the Great Spirit. It flowed and flowed spreading outward and outward until the lake Ahwei'ha, quiet as a dream, reflected in its depths trees and mountains and it is there to this day, the gift of the Great Spirit. Then the Great Spirit listened to the prayers of his children and took away the dark cloud, and gave them meat and drink. Many hundreds had died of want and the great tribe was but a little one now. One day, looking up, they saw limned upon the great rock the figure of their lost chieftan. He was on horseback and pointing towards the West, where he can still be seen. They knew then that he had gone to the Happy Hunting Grounds.

Gilbert Lee, returning each vacation, often made a third in these excursions of Marion and her father, and many a choice bit of scenery found its way to market through his talented brush. He grew very fond of Sweetheart (as everybody called her), and never came without some little gift for her. Once Susan confided to him that she could not get such dresses as she thought Sweetheart ought to have.

"You see," said she, "I can make her little gingham all

right, but I don't know styles, and I'm not worth a fig to copy the clothes the tourist ladies wear. She couldn't wear such hig-gledy-piggledy things if I did."

"I'll fix that fine," said the good fellow. "Mother and Mollie will be glad to buy her things and send them to her. Send her measure each spring and fall and it'll be attended to all right."

And so it came about that Marion was always suitably and neatly attired. Susan taught her the sweet and womanly ways of her own life and religion, and from her father she had lessons in a few books, and in forest and mountain and valley. From Gilbert she received many a tactful suggestion greatly needed by the child who had never entered a church or school.

Years passed, and in the circuit of those wonderful mountains the little Marion grew to womanhood. Possessed of the beauty of her mother, softened and subdued by the temperament of her father, she developed, like the wild roses which blossomed about the porch, into a beauty all her own. She was a dreamer, like her father, but never morbid; full of deep and living faith in her Heavenly Father, she wasted no time in idle complaints. She early made the acquaintance, if anything so one-sided would be called acquaintance, with the hermit.

One bright and early morning when the brown thrushes were singing their *jubilate*, and all nature rejoicing in the glowing season, Marion and Dandy set out for a long and happy day. Not in any hurry were they this day. Dandy ambled along at his own sweet will, and Marion drew in long breaths of the life-giving air. As they went through the valley she noted the manzanita blossoms, pink as a lady's ear, the lovely azalea thickets, each blossom with its glowing heart; the wild roses rioting over every little crevice and rock, and in every nook and corner where they could find a foothold columbines swinging their many colored bells, bending to every breeze. Keenly alive to beauty, Marion held Dandy to a walk and as she ascended the mountain road glimpsed a most rare and lovely sight. In the valley just below her, her attention was arrested by a hollow drumming, and glancing down to see the cause she espied a gorgeous ruffled grouse standing in the edge of the wood by a fallen tree.

He was standing erect, clad in all the magnificence of early spring plumage; his head crowned by a crest of brown and red and gold; his long and finely tinted tail sweeping the ground. Among the fallen leaves of last year he stood, a re-incarnation of their autumn tints, and he was calling, calling, calling for his mate. His bright and glancing eye, his noble bearing, his gorgeous plumage, told the love story of the woodland. He was about to drum, and again sounded the muffled call which Marion had heard — tap — tap tap, the call of the lover to his love. He waited, head erect — crest uplifted and not in vain, for timidly as a young maiden, alone and hesitating half concealed by the bracken, step by step came a little brown hen. The bright eyes caught sight of her, the listening ears heard her timid foot, and instantly the noble bird emitting cries of joy, beating his beautifully colored wings rapidly until he seemed in a mist, curvetted and danced, but with great dignity, drawing nearer and nearer as she retreated, saluting the lady of his heart. It was a pretty and unusual sight, and Marion was delighted. "I'll tell Father that at last I saw a grouse 'drumming,'" she decided as she rode on.

CHAPTER VII

MARION AND THE HERMIT

From the highway Marion saw the little cabin which she had often seen before in passing. This time the hermit was out in his little garden, planting early seeds, his dog — an Indian dog which Ah-wei-ha had given him years before — following at his heels. Clad in deer-skin shirt and leggings, which he habitually wore, his long and snow white hair waving in the breeze, for his head was uncovered; his snowy beard reaching to his breast, he was a most unusual looking man. Moved by some sudden impulse Marion called, "Calah, Calah" — the Indian name by which alone he was known. He did not reply nor turn; again she called, "I want to come and see you, Ca'lah, cannot I? Let down the bridge." The portcullis was up. Getting no reply and being a young lady who was accustomed to get what she wanted some way, Marion, sitting on Dandy's back, re-

connoitered the situation. The little creek was running full and free, but Marion and Dandy alike disdained any barriers. She put him at the bank and soon he was scrambling up the opposite one, and Marion sprang from his back, threw the bridle over his head, which was an order for him to stand, and walked up to the hermit. "I think you must get lonesome," said the little girl. "Dandy and I so often pass this way and see you always, oh, always alone, and I think you might like to have me come and see you once in a while. Would'n't you?"

David turned and lifted his head, as the sweet and mellow voice — so like one he once before had heard and loved, fell upon his ear. Some chord of memory was dimly stirred. He knitted his brow in a vain effort to recall the past, and the little maiden chattered of his roses and his garden, his dog and his squirrels. She told him of the beautiful grouse she had seen that morning and laughed gaily as she recounted the story of his dancing. David spoke no word. No smile lighted his countenance, but when she was ready to leave he walked with her, let down the portcullis and watched her ride away.

For a long time he stood silently looking at the turn in the road where she and her pony disappeared, then turned and, walking slowly, entered his cabin. He walked no more that day in his garden, and all night he wandered about the mountains. Some echo of the past had disturbed his serenity and yet he could not understand. After this it often happened that Marion would visit her hermit. Always, if at home, at her call he would let down the bridge, and many a little comfort found its way to the solitary man from Susan's goodly store. That he never spoke nor smiled, disturbed Marion not at all. She supposed that was the way of hermits, and she laughed and chattered enough for two. She told him simple stories of her innocent and uneventful life, and sang to him her little songs, well repaid if he would utter an Indian word of praise or pleasure. She slipped her soft little hand in his when saying farewell, and he held it in a lingering clasp as if loath to let it go.

And so the years, happy and uneventful, passed. Marion was sixteen — tall and straight as one of the mountain pines, with purple blue eyes and curling dark lashes; with golden,

fluffy hair that grew up from her broad, white forehead in waves, like her mother's. She had also inherited from that mother a beautiful and sympathetic voice. To sing was the natural expression of her words. Grave or gay, happy or sad, Marion sang, and no bird of the valley warbled more sweetly.

About this time it chanced that Madam Neblè, the great contralto, worn out with an arduous season, needed complete rest and sought it at the Valley Inn. One morning early she heard Marion carolling beneath her window. She was interested at once and being ennuied, having absolutely nothing else to do, took great delight in training the young girl's voice. She could already play simple little accompaniments to her equally simple songs and hymns taught by Susan on the little old piano, and when the chilly days of October came and Madam Neblè left the valley to resume her work Marion could sing as she never sang before. "You have a great career," said Madam. "When you are tired of the valley come to me and I will give you the teaching that will make of you one great prima donna." Marion treasured this in her heart.

From this summer Gilbert Lee sent her music and books from the city, and during the long winter evenings after the tourist season had closed, her simple, household duties done, Marion read and studied and sang. With what pride and love Susan and her husband saw this child of their love developing into a lovely and talented woman! It often happened that the Indian chieftains would come in, sit about the fire and smoke. John was in his element then. He led them on to tell their most cherished legends in their picturesque language: how the valley was once all valley, and one little hill sprang up at the call of the Great Spirit; how it grew and grew until it was a great mountain; how they learned wisdom of all the wild creatures guided by the Great Spirit and were very happy and prosperous until the evil spirit came among them and made them quarrel and fight among themselves. Then a great and mighty thunder came, and the winds blew: the earth opened and swallowed up many people: waters spouted out and the great mountains cracked and broke and slid down into the valley and many were killed. Those left looked at the face of To-tau-kon-nu'-la on the great rock and it was angry. Then

they met together, smoked the peace pipe and divided their hunting grounds. After that there was peace and plenty. Sometimes, wrapping their blankets around them, they would lie down, feet to the fire, and rest all night. Sometimes it happened that Gilbert Lee was fortunate enough to be at the Inn at these times and always alive to the unusual, he portrayed these children of the wilds in their native environment and many a choice canvas was the result. He, more by example than precept, taught Marion many of the little refinements of social life. To him she sang, and from him learned of that great world beyond the hills of which she knew nothing, and he unconsciously awoke in her an unquenchable desire to see for herself that unknown land. "Some day Gilbert," she said once, "some day I mean to go to the great city and sing." And Gilbert would laugh and pat her head, fancying that she was still a child. In many ways she was an ignorant and, if you will, spoiled child, but it needed only a touch, as the folded bud springs open at the kiss of the sun, to transform that child into a woman, and it came all too soon.

CHAPTER VIII

SORROW IN THE VALLEY

Thus peacefully and happily the years passed for Marion until the fall of 1905. Then came a great and unexpected change in the life of the girl. Susan McKinley had been gradually failing in health all summer. It had been unusually hot and dusty, swarms of tourists had come and gone, each new lot demanding and receiving constant attention. Cheerful, busy from morning until night, never complaining, Susan, as she would phrase it, "kept up." In vain did Mandy strive to relieve her of her onerous duties. Husband and daughter alike saw no change in her, and when one raw and chilly morning in late October, after the last tourist had gone and the fierce winds of Autumn began to howl about the house, she failed to get up, they were both filled with consternation and self-reproach. Marion, realizing for the first time how many, many times she could have saved her mother's strength and did not, began to repay her in some measure for her care of her.

She assumed at once the duties of the house, under Mandy's supervision, and John McKinley, dazed and bewildered by the strange happening of his Susan being ill, sat all day by her bedside, patting her hand and being comforted by her.

At midwinter all intercourse with the outside world had long since ceased. Even Tom Kennedy had laid up his stage for the winter, and when he occasionally came to see how they fared he came on skis. Snow, piled in drifts thirty feet deep, filled the ravines. Every tree, shrub and branch along the now silent river was a marvel of beauty; like a snow-white, wedding ribbon, that erstwhile laughing, gurgling, bounding river now bound the valley. In the house the fires now were kept burning and curtains drawn, shutting out so far as possible the wintry cold. Susan, lying upon her bed, smiled upon John, her beloved John, and Sweetheart, as they kept watch over her. Simple remedies failed to renew her strength, and doctors there was none in the valley. Daily, almost imperceptibly, her strength declined, until one peaceful night when the stars shone with wonderful brilliancy in the cold blue vault of the sky they knew it for the last.

Conscious of her failing powers Susan said to her husband, "Father, I think we must tell her. It may be when I am gone she will find some of her own people, and I think it right that she should know."

"Yes," he assented, "you are right; but I cannot bear to lose her."

"You will not lose her. Sweetheart will never leave you, not if she is the daughter of a king."

The girl came in and sat down by the bed. Susan gently took her hand and fondled it as she talked. "My Sweetheart — my well-loved, little Sweetheart, I have something to tell you that must be told. Can you remember when you were a very little child, taking a wonderful stage ride? Tom Kennedy was there and a sweet, beautiful, little mother like a sunbeam — who cradled you in her arms and sang to you — and a tall, dark father? Try to remember, Sweetheart. That was when you came to the valley. Then you were very sick and we all nursed you. One dreadful night your father and mother went out to walk (for you are only our child in our love, Sweetheart).

They wandered as far as Mirror Lake, and that was the last known of either of them alive. The next day your sweet and lovely mother was found lying dead, and by her side, strangled no doubt by your father's hands, was a great wild-cat. From that day to this we have never been able to find your father, and we think that, half crazed by grief, he wandered off in the mountains and was killed by wild beasts."

She paused and kept gently, gently passing her frail hand over Marion's as it rested nerveless in her clasp.

Marion's eyes were fixed on her mother's face and she asked but one question, "Who am I then?"

"Dearest, we do not know. We only know that your father was a Scotchman named David Campbell, and that your dear mother had been a singer, and this we only knew from her. Tell her, father, what she said."

"She said that your father was brought up for the ministry in the strictest Scotch Presbyterian church: that he had taken a solemn oath never to marry, but when her mother died and she was left alone in London he married her, and always felt that he had committed the unpardonable sin — against the Holy Ghost, in breaking his vow. They left two suit-cases here. You shall see them later. Your father must have had his money and papers and tickets in his pocket, as there is nothing here to identify him. I advertised many times but had no reply; so we took you in place of our own lost, little girl, and you have repaid us every day of your life."

To Marion this, heard from dying lips and supplemented by her foster father, seemed scarcely real. Her first thought was, "How good, how good they have been to me." She laid her head on Susan's breast — where she had always wept out her baby sorrows and been comforted, and sobbed, "Dear — dearest dear, and my daddy too, I love you, I love you for being so good to me, and God will surely bless you."

"He has," said Susan faintly. "He has all the years, and now, Sweetheart, take care of Daddy — we have never been parted and he'll not stay away from me very long. This I know."

"I will never, never leave him," sobbed Marion. "He shall be my first and only thought."

"That is well, my little Sweetheart."

Silence reigned in the room. Only the occasional falling of a burning log in the fireplace or the slipping of the drifts of snow about the windows broke the stillness. Day dawned, tardily, white and ghostly, and John knelt beside the bed, his gray head on Susan's pillow; her hand was lying over his breast. He was asleep — worn out with anxiety and sorrow, and so was she. With the dawn she had parted from them, and they had not known. Marion, overcome by days and nights of sleeplessness, had missed the one supreme moment when spirit and body parted. She had never seen death, and for her this gently smiling mother, with that strange radiance which sometimes glows upon the face of the dead still lingering there, whose last conscious moments had been a caress, had no terrors. Then and there, Marion ceased to be a child and took up her woman's work. Gently she folded Susan's dear hands on her bosom and woke her father, "Daddy dear, Daddy dear, come and comfort your little girl."

To him the death of his dear wife was only a going before. Silently he rose and, going to his own room, closed the door. Later he returned to the living room. He had washed, and brushed his still beautiful hair, donned clean linen and smiled gently upon Marion who gazed at him in wonder, "She is only ahead a little way, daughter, I will soon catch up," he said cheerfully. "We traveled a long and sometimes weary road together, and now it seems to me such a little way — just around the turning."

Mandy, heart-sorry but reticent as always, was a tower of strength in those days. Sam Lee had prepared a late breakfast, and they made a pretense of eating it, and then Marion and Mandy sat down to consider what was to be done. Burial was out of the question for weeks yet, even if she could get help to bury her mother. Her father she saw would be useless as a counselor, so wrapped in his dreams was he — but he said, "Do not despair, daughter; there is never a door closed that another one is not opened. 'God's in his heaven, be the people ever so unquiet.' That has been a lot of comfort to me and you must always bear in mind that He'll find a way out for you."

And this "way out" came even while he spoke, in the per-

son of Tom Kennedy. Tom, who had grown uneasy about the family for some reason and now came in on skis to see for himself how they fared. Never was guest more welcome. John McKinley grasped his hand and turning to Sweetheart said, "See now, daughter, how our Father finds the way out. We were in sore trouble and distress, apparently no way out — no one to call on for help, just a little girl and a foolish old man: and your mother lying unburied. What happens? Why, he sent one of his messengers to Tom Kennedy and he said, 'Go to the Inn; they're in trouble. Help them.' And Tom obeys and comes — the only man in the valley who would have been of any use and who knew and loved Susan."

And Marion said to the bewildered man, "He wants you to know Mother died this morning and he is sure God sent you to help us. And it must be so because I need you so. What — what are we to do?"

"Dear, dear," grieved Tom, "Susan gone — the dear good woman. I've never had a greater loss. I knew somethin' was goin' wrong here about. John, man, I'm sorry, sorry for you, and my little Sweetheart — well, well, well — the Lord sure was on His job when He sent me in here to-day. Can I see her?"

Marion led the way, and Tom stood quietly looking at the peaceful sleeper still lying on her bed.

"A good woman! A good woman," he said, "and gone to her reward. She must 'a' seen some of the glories they talk about to get that light on her face." Wiping his eyes with his coat sleeve he turned and left the room. "We must just do the best we can, Sweetheart," he answered. "We can't get a coffin nor have a buryin' until spring opens, but we can manage somehow to make things more comfortable. Have Sam Lee get me a hammer and some nails out in the woodshed, and do you, Sweetheart, dress your dear mother in her prettiest dress and brush that pretty hair the way she always wore it. It'll do you good to fuss over her and to make her look so nice for father to see. Mandy will help you, I know," and Marion, who yesterday would have shuddered and cried over a dead bird, to-day bravely, tenderly took up her woman's task.

CHAPTER IX

MARION'S PLANS

Under Tom's competent and busy hands a rude coffin was manufactured from packing boxes and neatly lined with white linen by Mandy, and in it Susan McKinley, robed in her black silk dress, with soft white lace about her neck and hands, smiled as she slept. In an upper chamber they laid their dead, and over it John read in a clear and triumphant voice the beautiful burial service, for to him had come the certainty that she "rested from her labors." Then they closed and locked the door until the spring freshets should enable them to place her in the little burial plot, now under many feet of snow.

That evening, as they sat around the fire — John with a book on his knee but gazing into the fire and thinking his own thoughts; Marion on a low chair by Tom's side, her hand on his knee as though she needed the assurance of his presence and help; Mandy sitting by the lamp with lips tightly closed knitting as usual — Tom questioned, "What'll you folks do now? I reckon until spring opens you'll have to do the best you can and stay right here."

"Yes," replied John, "I'll stay right here with Susan until she calls me. I guess I'll be going in the spring."

"And leave me, Daddy?" cried Marion. "You'll never do that; you couldn't be so cruel."

"Daughter, your life is before you, mine is lived. When our little Sweetheart died a part of our life went with her. It never came back and now Susan is gone — I don't see — I can't see how I can live without her. I'll do my best. I'm willing to do that for you, my little girl, but when God calls me I must go and you must not worry. When you were a little, little child, Sweetheart, and seemed to be left desolate, God had you in His care. He raised up your mother and me to love and care for you, and when He takes me away He'll not forget to see to you. Cheer up, my daughter; the way's not very long for any of us at the longest, and there's never a trouble but there's a way out. Don't forget — don't you ever forget, whatever comes, the road that Susan set your little feet

on, and that she has traveled until it has led her to her heavenly home."

After Tom left them, the days dragged on — days of emptiness and sorrow, days in which all nature seemed only waiting and the inmates of the Inn as well. Nothing seemed worth doing until the sun melted and that dear but dead occupant upstairs could be laid to rest.

Daily John McKinley grew more silent and dreamy; he seemed himself to have almost entered the spirit world. Sometimes he would talk of Susan as she was when he first met her, of her pretty ways, of her cheeriness, her gay and laughing girlhood, and then of her sweetness as a mother, her loveliness as a wife — Susan, always Susan. He would wander into the locked room and spend hours, coming out cold and shivering but with a smile on his face as though he had indeed held converse with his beloved wife. When the March winds howled around the house and the first warm days of coming spring began to melt the snow drifts and to unlock the river; when it broke its icy chains and sang its spring song of joy and gladness; when the early birds gathered on tree and bush and the earliest blossoms pushed up their lovely heads through the snow, John McKinley gently passed away. "God is calling me, you cannot keep me, I must go," he said to Marion, as she bent over him weeping, and once he put his hand on her bowed head and said, "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb."

Tom Kennedy, the ever watchful friend, was with Marion during much of this time. It was he who arranged for the double funeral in the little God's acre, and notified all the valley folks, even the Indian friends, of the time when, side by side, John and Susan McKinley would be laid to rest. A dear old man who spent several winters in the valley because he loved it and could make others love it too, through his beautiful books, volunteered to read the burial service; and one still afternoon when the mountain tops were covered with golden gleams from the setting sun they buried them together. It was a small but picturesque gathering around that little enclosure — there were a dozen woodmen in flannel shirts and top boots. Indian chiefs and underchiefs in deerskin shirts and leggins, their faces painted in tones denoting sorrow; Tom's

brother and family who lived some miles away; and on every face was sorrow for the passing away of the genial couple who had for so many years made the Valley Inn a house for sojourners and homeless alike. In the back-ground, under shadow of the trees, stood Ahweiha and her sister squaws, silent and sorrowful.

Once again Tom Kennedy and Marion sat by the desolate hearth in the living room of the Inn. A glowing fire lit up and made cheerful the lonely apartment. Tom, his pipe in his mouth and hands on his knees, sat listlessly looking into the fire. Marion, a slender figure clothed in black, sat opposite, white and frail looking from the confinement and grief of that long winter. She clasped and unclasped her hands nervously. For some time neither spoke, and then Tom began to speak, "Sweetheart, you once said something to me about some satchels or something that your mother told you belonged to you. Do you know where they are?"

For an answer Marion went into the little room adjoining the living room and returned with two suit-cases. Both were travel-worn and decorated with many addresses in red, blue and white, acclaiming their foreign travels. Tom put them on the little table and opened them. In the one a suit of men's clothes, plain and serviceable and such other belongings as appertain to the wardrobe of a gentleman, not a card or letter or address of any kind. Tom opened the other case and was at once apprised that it was the dwelling place of a lady's garments. A faint, elusive odor of violets greeted his nostrils — a filmy gray silk with little violets strewn over its background dainty and fresh as when first worn came next. With a delicacy perhaps unexpected in our Tom, he withdrew his great red hands from the dainty apparel and said, "You take them out, Sweetheart. Maybe there's a card or money or some address."

She lifted with reverent hands the filmy night gowns, the soft, fluffy, lace-trimmed garments so like the raiment of a large doll; the tiny tan boots and silk stockings, and from the other corner little things, dainty and fresh for a baby girl — these Susan had evidently permitted Marion to wear and as she outgrew them replaced them in the case. In neither suit-

case was there the smallest mark by which Tom could identify Marion or her people. "Most likely," he muttered to himself, "he had his money and his letters in his pockets when he went out. Keep them, Sweetheart," he advised as he closed them. "They may come in handy some time; they're of no use just now, put them away. Now, sit here by me and we'll talk. Let me smoke, I can all'as think better when I'm smokin'. Sometimes I think women wouldn't be so nervous and fussy over little things if they'd smoke, though I don't know as I'd jest like to see this stinkin' old corn cob pipe of mine between your pretty lips, my girl. But that's not what I want to talk about. What do you want to do? You can't stay here alone and run this house with only Mandy, can you?"

"I've been thinking that I'd go to the city," said Marion, "and learn to sing. When Madam Neblè was here she taught me a great deal, and she said that I must come to her in the city and she would look out for me. She gave me this card. She's a great singer you know."

"Years ago," interrupted Tom.

"Yes, but I think she meant it and I think that she will take me with her. She was so kind."

Tom was scarcely better acquainted with the outside world than the child beside him. His life was lived in the narrow bounds of the valley. He knew his "bronchs"—his stage route and his mountains and valleys—two or three times he had gone to "Frisco" and lived for a day or two in untold luxury at the "Bell and Cat," a small hostelry with a resplendent bar to which Tom, at those times paid undivided attention—though when on duty he was absolutely responsible. Otherwise the city was an unknown country to him; of its dangers and its pitfalls he knew absolutely nothing.

"Well," he remarked after puffing at his pipe for some time in silent thought, "Gilbert Lee's there, and if the Madam should fail you, not that I think she will, Sweetheart, but females never can be built on—not for steadiness, you understand. Now there's my bronchs—Pedro has his stubborn fits and his runaway fits, all's in his blood; but when Pedro has found his master he knows it and no more didoes that drive for him; but there's Kate: Lord love you, Sweetheart, just as I

think I've got Kate down to her work and am settlin' for a good steady drive, what does Kate do? Why, she's up and away. She's on her hind legs one minute pawing the air, and has her head down and heels in the air the next, and jest as I'm mad enough to flay her alive she rolls the whites of her eyes at me and laughs. She does, Sweetheart, and then after she's had her fling she behaves like an angel. That's the woman of her. She can't help it. She's made that contrary. So don't you tie to your Madam altogether, but trust to Gilbert Lee. He's summered here a good many years and he's all right — I think I can get my brother to keep the Inn and I'm sure Mandy'll stay and keep things goin'. The rent of the house will keep you till you get going. You can't stay here anyway, and if the things don't turn out to your liking you can always come back. Your father said something to me about a deed in a tin trunk. Do you know anything about it?"

"There is a tin trunk in their room, but I have not opened it."

"Now, Sweetheart, listen to me. I'm your friend and I'm honest if I ain't much else, and I can drive my bronchs as close to the edge and not slip off as any man. I allas bring my load safe through. You haven't anybody else, as I can see, to help you, and if you're willin' I'll have a look at them papers."

In reply, Marion drew out the little tin trunk — dented and scarred by many years of travel — and lifted the lid. A little child's suit neatly folded lay upon the top, a little brown coat and hat, a bright plaid dress. "That's it!" shouted Tom. "The very dress and hat you wore when you came in the stage that first time I saw you. I mind it all now; that bright plaid dress and the pretty plume on the hat and the baby face under its brim."

There were also a tiny pair of tan boots worn at the toes, a chain and watch, a ring and pin mementoes of the dead mother, probably taken from her after she was found and kept to identify the child if possible; beneath was a legal paper, duly signed, sealed and attested. Tom broke the seal. "To our dearly beloved adopted daughter Marion McKinley," it read in legal phraseology, "the house, lot and contents are bequeathed." Not a great fortune but it was all they had. Marion's tears fell fast as she read of this loving and tender gift.

Tom carefully examined the paper. "I ain't much of a scholar," he declared, "and it seems to me to be all regular and above board, but I know a lawyer friend at Raymond who's as honest as they make 'em and I'll take it when I go again, have him look it over and record it. We musn't drive too near the edge, Sweetheart, for it's all that's left you. Now the next thing is, when can you go? If Budd takes the house he'll want it early enough to get it cleaned and ready for summer trade."

"I will go," said Marion, "as soon as we can get to the railroad."

"I guess we can make it by the middle of April. I ain't no great shakes a horseback myself these years. I'd rather have a step under my feet and six good ribbons in my hand, but I'll see you on the train all right. You can ride Dandy and I'll bring him back again."

"Will you take care of him, Tom?"

"Sure, I will; don't you fret about one single thing here, Sweetheart. I'll see to it all until you come home again, so, my girl, you and Mr. Pig-tail can get to work to-morrow packing up and putting away things, and the very first day that the drifts are melted so that I think we can make it I'll be on hand."

Mandy came in from the kitchen and Tom acquainted her with their plans. She did not say much, that was never her way, but she looked at Sweetheart with set lips. "If you think you must go, Marion," she said — she never called her Sweetheart, because she thought if a girl had a name she'd ought to be called by it — "I'll stay and see to things here until you come back, for you'll come, I'm sure of that —"

"Mandy," interjected Tom slyly, "Couldn't we keep her house for her?"

"Tom Kennedy," snapped Mandy, "talk sense or don't talk at all. I call'ate I'm able to keep house without the help of any man, let alone you."

CHAPTER X

LEAVING THE VALLEY

When the April sun came out warm and bright, and early flowers began to peep through the fast melting snow, the little rivers to sing gladsomely, and all nature to join in the great *jubilate*, Marion left Mandy and Sam Lee in charge of the Valley Inn Hotel (under Mandy, of course) and with necessary luggage packed in the smallest compass, mounted her little Pinto, gentled by Tom so many years before and since then her almost daily companion, and accompanied by him, mounted upon "Pedro," began her journey, ignorantly fearless, into that great and unknown world for which she had longed and of which she had dreamed golden dreams. The roads were at their worst. In the valley the snow still lay in unbroken drifts impassable except on skis or horseback, but after they reached the State road travelling was better. They waded through snow, slid on ice, forded little running streams, breaking through the rotting ice, and here and there in warm little nooks, Marion espied bits of verdure and tiny blue flowerets — liver-wort, waxen white, spring beauties, and through the woodlands the gay dogwood opening its waxy white cups to the sun. Tom spoke but little as they journeyed — as is the way of men who live in solitary places and commune with their own souls and nature, but before they reached Raymond he said, "It's a big world, Sweetheart, and mostly a bad one I reckon, from what I hear. Maybe you're putting your head in the lion's mouth. I don't know, I've never been outside of the mountains often and there I've allas found that straight living and a brave front will win out every time. Don't you forget that story your mother used to read about God shutting the lion's mouth when bad men threw Daniel in. What he done for him I reckon He'll do for you. I guess it was the innocence of Dan'l that saved him much as anything. Don't forget that, Sweetheart. Keep innocent and don't you forget your father's favorite line either, 'God's in His Heaven!' But if you do get into trouble and want somebody maybe nearer, just you send a line to 'The Bell and Cat.' I'll get it somehow and I'll be on hand."

"Tom! Tom!" cried the girl, "you're all that's left of the old life. I'm coming back, Tom, back to my dear mountains and you. I'll remember all you say and do all you say, and you're to take care of Dandy for me and you're not to worry, not one little bit. I've written to Madam, and she'll surely meet me at the station and I've got money, Tom, which Daddy gave me, such a lot, I think 'most a hundred dollars and I'll find Gilbert Lee — so dear, dear old Fuss-box, don't worry. Look for me when the valley is all in bloom, for I don't think I can stay away then. Good-bye, Tom, good-bye."

She threw her arms about his rugged neck and kissed his lips, to Tom's great embarrassment, though he hugged her closely. He wiped his eyes with his sleeve and blew a great blast on his nose, turned from her and remarked that it was time for that train, and as he spoke the little train came rolling in, discharged its load of passengers, few at this time of year, and stood ready for the return journey. Tom saw the brave young face watching through the car window; then he passed the back of his hand across his eyes, took Dandy's bridle rein in his hand, mounted Pedro, and resolutely turned his back on the train and rode away. And Marion, ignorantly fearless of that unknown land to which she was speeding, watched him out of sight through her tears.

That night at midnight the train pulled into the grand depot. It had been delayed many hours by a washout, and now at this hour of darkness and danger Marion first found herself in the city of her dreams; terrified by the noise and confusion incident to an incoming train; the yelling of newsboys; calling of their hotels by hackmen; rumble of freight wagons; women with baskets on their arms selling crumpets; velvet-eyed Italian boys making a din on their hurdy-gurdies; Chinamen, slant-eyed, with long black queues everywhere; smart little Japanese looking like the "yellow jackets" of her mountains, darting about on innumerable errands; bells clanging for belated meals from restaurant doors. Such a din! To Marion, who had never been beyond the confines of the valley — accustomed only to its great silence and the musical cadences of nature — the noise was deafening and confusing. Suit-case in hand, she stood looking helplessly about her. Following the crowd, she passed

through the gate and into the waiting room. White-aproned waiters called their restaurant, "Supper — here's your nice hot supper." Madam Neblè was not there. Marion was hungry — through the glass doors she saw inviting little tables with white cloths waiting the belated travelers. Still following the crowd she entered the door — was shown to a seat by a pompous head waiter, and gave her modest order as the other guests did. After she had eaten and paid her bill, tipping the waiter as she saw them do, she went back into the waiting room. What now was to be done? Madam, she thought, had come and, tired of waiting, had gone home. Where was her home? She did not know that at that very hour Madam was resting after a great concert nearly three thousand miles away. She thought she would go to "The Bell and Cat" — Tom's only hotel. Surely that was best, but she found hacks and carriages had departed whilst she was in the restaurant. She stood upon the sidewalk alone at midnight in that great city, unafraid because she knew nothing to fear; puzzled a little, that was all. Accustomed in her life to reading the heavens, she glanced at the moon, shining dimly through a yellow halo — a sinister circle of green surrounded that. Faintly the stars gleamed through gathering mist. "Weather-breeder," she muttered. "We'll have a storm before morning." Anxious to reach her hotel, she walked a little way beyond the platform of the depot and glanced helplessly around. To her great joy she saw a familiar figure approaching her. It was Mr. Fykes, who had several times toured the valley with gay parties of women and men. He was short and stout and slightly bald, with a good natured face, rather flabby and full, with singularly red lips. She at once recollected him and how pleasant he had always seemed. He was dressed neatly and a large anchor chain with many charms glistened on his rotund person. Unhesitatingly, Marion spoke his name. His dark eyes lighted with surprise and pleasure as he recognized her.

"Why, bless my soul, if it isn't my little Sweetheart of the valley! How on earth did you get here? Well, well, I am surprised. Of all things! And how and where are your good father and mother?"

Eagerly Marion greeted him, overjoyed to see a familiar

face in that strange city, and told her simple story. "I am all alone; my dear father and mother are gone and I have come in to study under Madam Neblè. Somehow, the train being late, I missed her, but I must go to 'The Cat and Bell' hotel and to-morrow I will find her."

"Your father and mother gone, how?"

Marion's eyes filled. "They died this winter, and Tom and Mandy helped me bury them. I am all alone!"

"Alone, poor, pretty, little kid." A gleam of satisfaction passed over his face and his manner changed — became more masterful. "You cannot go to a hotel at this hour," he said aloud. "That would never do. I will take you to a friend's house for to-night and in the morning we'll look up that hotel. I don't recall hearing of it." He gave a shrill whistle through his fingers and it was answered very soon by a cab suddenly appearing from somewhere and drawing up to the curb. Mr. Fykes handed Marion in, gave some direction to the driver and seated himself beside her. "This is a find," he said, laughing. "I came to the depot to meet a friend, that friend doesn't come; you came to meet a friend and your friend doesn't come; then I meet you and it's all right."

Over cobblestone pavements the cab rumbled and jolted, up the steep inclines, down the slopes, farther and farther away from the city lights and the main street. The night was ominously still. The moon with its yellow ring gleamed dully from a pitch-black sky, here and there sickly gas or electric lights shone, seeming rather to accentuate the darkness than to illuminate it. A few belated citizens trod the deserted streets; here and there a door opened and a man or two men staggered out; once Marion saw a woman come out. She was leading a child by the hand, and a man was staggering beside her. As they went on up the rough hill, lights became more frequent. Policemen in uniforms, their stars gleaming on their breasts, stood on every corner, and through the silence of the night came a discordant singing and shouting from a group of young men making their uncertain way home. "For we're jolly good fellows," they sang. "We'll dance all night till broad day light and go home with the girls in the morning."

"Is it always like this?" asked Marion, shrinking nearer to

her protector. "The town so noisy, so full of drinking men and sad women?"

"Pretty much so — pretty much. It's a great city, and all great cities must have their fun. Those young fellows now — as soon as they sow their wild oats, they'll settle down and be respectable citizens."

"It seems to me," said Marion, "if they sow wild oats they'll likely reap a crop of wild oats. In the valley we always reap as we sow."

"That's so, that's so in the valley, but you're not in the valley now and before another day dawns you'll realize that fact, and see stranger sights than a few drunken men." He little realized how terribly that prophecy would be fulfilled before another day.

CHAPTER XI

THE EARTHQUAKE

He rapped upon the glass window, and the cab drew up to the curb before an unpretentious but massive doorway and stopped. Electric lights glowed through ground-glass globes softly upon the mosaic pavement of the vestibule, a grilled iron door of exquisite workmanship guarded the entrance; through its interstices a Venetian lantern of many colored glasses shed its prismatic lights. Cabby paid and dismissed, Mr. Fykes rang the bell once — twice — three times; almost instantly the door swung on its noiseless hinges and they passed up a broad and beautiful marble stairway to an elevator in the rear of the hall. This they entered and were shot up several stories. Marion clung to Mr. Fykes with nervous fingers. She had never before seen an elevator, much less been in one. "It's all right," he said protectingly, as to a little child; "we'll get out in a moment — there we are —" and when they merged from the cage it was to pause before a brilliantly illumined salon. To Marion's unaccustomed eyes it was fairy-land. At the far end of a dais, screened by palms, a band was playing gay and charming music, little tables glittering with snowy napery and cut glass were scattered about the room, and at most

of them sat men and women in full evening dress. Roses filled the numerous vases, and garlands of roses adorned the many long mirrors which reflected the gay scene on all sides. Cut glass chandeliers with pendant prisms were aglow with lights. Little nooks and corners screened off by costly and gorgeous portières gave a glimpse of easy chairs, lounges and tables; from the tessellated ceiling hung gilded cages in which many a bird swung and sung in the brilliant light. The room seemed full of people. Everybody was laughing and talking at once. Some were playing cards; wine bottles and glasses filled with sparkling liquor were upon each table, and were being constantly refilled by the stolid white-coated China boys. Mr. Fykes watched Marion intently. No smallest expression of her face escaped his scrutiny, but he read only wonder and delighted surprise at the beauty of the scene. Standing at the open door in her brown travelling suit, with her brown toque upon her fluffy golden hair, she looked like a little wild partridge who had fluttered by chance into a covey of birds of Paradise. The women were exquisitely gowned, silks and satins in soft and lovely tints, or vivid reds and blues, rare and costly jewels upon alabaster necks and rounded arms; beautiful hands alight with priceless rings, beautifully coiffured hair; all young, most of them beautiful, sat at the tables or strolled about with their partners — men older or younger than they, some very young, some with bald heads and a sprinkling of gray in their beards, all bearing upon their faces the ineffaceable marks of dissipation. Presently, as they stood surveying the scene, a lady elaborately gowned came to Mr. Fykes and Marion. She wore black lace over white satin and many jewels. Once she must have been beautiful, and still retained her superb form and fine eyes. Nature, or art, had given her an imposing figure. She was large and stately and as she advanced towards them she cast an inquiring glance at Mr. Fykes. He replied by an almost imperceptible lifting of the eyebrows.

"Madam Conte," he said genially, "I found my little friend of the Valley Inn on a belated train coming into the city. She has no friends in the city — so I brought her to you. Can you put her up for the night?"

"Indeed, yes, for half a dozen nights," replied the lady,

tapping Marion's gloved hand in a friendly pat. "Such a pretty little girl. Have you had supper, my dear?"

"I had something at the depot," said Marion. "What a wonderful place! This is all so new to me. How beautiful everything is! Mr. Fykes did not tell me that you had a party to-night."

The woman smiled at Mr. Fykes and he smiled back whimsically. "A daughter of the Wilds — a daughter of the Wilds." "I will show you to a room."

"Oh, no, no; let me sit here and watch this enchanting scene, mayn't I? I did not think there were so many beautiful women in the world," begged Marion. Perhaps there was a tinge of sadness in madam's voice as she answered, "Yes, many of them are beautiful. Would you not like to dress in such lovely clothes and be lovely like they are? Fine feathers make fine birds, you know."

"I would rather sing, oh yes, a thousand times. I don't think I could be happy all the time dressing and dancing. I have come to San Francisco to study music with Madam Neblè."

"So,"—madam's tone was a trifle colder—"well, sit here and watch the dancing and I will see you again, presently. Mr. Fykes, you're wanted at the 'phone."

Left alone, Marion's eyes followed the everchanging throng, and as she grew more familiar with the scene she began to individualize it and to understand that this was not as she at first supposed, a fashionable party, but more in the nature of a restaurant, for she noticed men ordering drinks of the soft-gliding, white-uniformed waiters, slant-eyed China boys, and tipping them. At a table near her sat a beautiful girl alone. She wore a black velvet gown above which her lovely neck and arms gleamed ivory white; a single American Beauty rose, vivid red, glowed above her bosom; pearls were on her neck and twined in her magnificent black hair. It waved and rippled back from a broad, white and noble brow. Soft black eyes full of sadness rested on Marion as she sat resting her elbow on the table and her chin in the cup of her hand. Presently she spoke, without altering her position in the very least, and her voice was sweet and low.

"Little girl, who brought you here? Do not turn or seem

to speak to me; we are under espionage here, answer quietly."

"Mr. Fykes brought me," Marion replied. "The train was late, I was alone; my friend did not meet me. He said I could spend the night here and in the morning he would take me to find my friend."

"You too! You too!" sighed the girl. "Listen to me, you must not stay here, to-night. You must not. Go anywhere, but don't stay here. The doors are guarded. Work your way quietly near to the large door. Watch your opportunity and, perhaps, you can slip out unseen. Get out, and when you do, hail a policeman and he will take care of you. Don't turn your head this way. If you don't get out to-night you never will. Don't look so frightened, guard your face. They are watching us." With a gay abandon totally at variance with her actions of a moment ago, the girl sprang to her feet and began to sing in a rich and lovely voice some college song. She was greeted by hand clappings, stampings and cheers, cries of, "Lola is singing. Go on, Lola, more!" She said to Marion *sotto voce*, "Do not leave this room, except by that front door, go! go! go!"

Fearful of — she knew not what — Marion prepared to obey her new friend by gradually lessening the distance between herself and the front door. This was not easy. The band struck up a waltz and instantly the room was full of laughing, jostling, staggering couples. Wine was also doing its work, and some of the guests were getting boisterous and quarrelsome. She saw a girl in red satin thrown over the table at which she had been sitting as she tossed a glass of wine in her partner's face. Another damsel, elaborately gowned, slapped the round and ruddy cheeks of her bald-headed companion. Madam, detained by some irregularity in the service, did not return, nor did Mr. Fykes. Marion, thoroughly frightened, knew then that he did not intend to return. Swiftly time passed. Faster and faster the band played, more noisy and uproarious grew the throng as they danced and sang, stamping their feet and clapping their hands at intervals. Marion found her progress impeded at every step. Finally, the band began playing the last number, the grand march, and called to the whirling couples to fall into line. The first faint streaks of day gleamed

through an uncurtained window. Each man grasped a partner and there was a squabble as to who should lead. "I'll lead." "No, I." "You led last time." "No, I." "Here's the leader," shouted the girl in red satin. "She the little partridge; she shall lead to-night! Here's fun. Glory be — Bill, Joe, take her by the arms and trot. Let the lamb lead us to the fold." The suggestion was at once adopted. Bill and Joe — two young half-tipsy men from some higher walk in life out for a good time — seized Marion's arms; between them she was dragged to the head of the line amid loud laughter and cheers and the march began — around and around the spacious room — up and down, winding in and out through maze after maze — romped that gay crowd, Marion in the van. At first she struggled in the grasp of the men, in the mêlée her hat fell off and her hair tumbled about her shoulders. Once aware of the uselessness of struggling, she ceased; steadied herself, lifted her haughty little head and like a captive queen, captive but not conquered, shook off the men's hands and marched between them. The faint mist of early morning stealing in made the lights grow dim — that day of doom was dawning, but to Marion it seemed darkest night. Suddenly, to the tortured soul came a remembrance of an old verse her father was fond of quoting, "God's in His heaven, be the people never so unquiet." As a hand laid upon a lute unstrung at once silences the discord, as the gentle dew falling upon a thirsty plant, as a great rock in a weary land, so this reminder of her early and happy days coming to the girl who had grown among her mountains with a deep religious faith in the power of the Almighty and His willingness to help, in this hour of danger and terror stilled the beating of her heart — no longer struggling or desiring to struggle, assured of help in time of need. As they passed the dais where the band still played she suddenly sprang upon it. Impelled by some power outside and beyond all thought of herself or her surroundings, she began to sing. Sweet and loud and clear, as the notes of the skylark when he rises soaring to the sky and pouring down his liquid music, rose Marion's noble voice in an impassioned cry to the only Power she knew and trusted. "God is my refuge and strength," she sang rejoicingly; "a very present help in trouble; therefore will not I fear

— will not I fear.” Sweet and clear, like some marvelously attuned instrument, rang out the challenge. Men and women paused, ceased their laughing, scoffing and jeering, called from the painted and sordid life of which they were a part — called by that wonderful voice so full of trust and confidence, to a life higher, holier, nobler, to protection of innocence; though she did not know it, Marion was from that moment safe — safe as in her little white bed at home, and still she sang, “I will not fear though the earth be removed and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea — though the waters thereof roar and be troubled — though the mountains shake —” What was this? Had her God indeed answered that childish cry for help? or did they imagine — that awestruck crowd — that the floors rose and fell and wavered beneath their feet; that the walls surged inward? Was that low and rumbling thunder overhead or underfoot? —? No time for any more queries. Like the sides of an accordion the walls of the room seemed to fold together and spread apart, pictures fell from their moldings, windows from their frames. All the lights went out, tables and chairs, bric-à-brac and dishes, piled in heaps upon the trembling floor — doors so lately guarded fell from their hinges — with a great crash the elevator went down and chaos reigned! Now they knew. With a great and bitter cry of “The Quake!” “The Quake!” the terror-stricken crowd began fighting their way — panic driven — to the fallen door. Forgotten was Marion — forgotten everything in the mad rush for life and safety. Screaming — crying — praying — cursing, that erstwhile gay and laughing throng fought down the flights of stairs now only for life. The new day was dawning as they emerged from the building. In its pure light those painted girls in tawdry finery, those men with pallid, world-worn faces, still in evening dress, seemed citizens of another world. In their midst Marion was borne onward like a stray leaf. Scarcely had they emerged from the doorway when, with a shuddering scream as of some monster in mortal agony, the house fell. With cries of terror they saw the clouds of dust rising from the fallen building and began calling for friends — sisters — brothers — were they all safe? Who was buried under that wreck? Whose were those groans and screams of agony? Questions not to be answered

for many days. Another tremor and still another, coming at intervals. The crowd rushing to the middle of the street pushed on, they knew not whither — and were met by another crowd, fleeing like themselves from wrecked and falling houses. Somebody yelled, “The Park! The Park!” and all faces turned towards that goal as perhaps the safest spot. If safety was anywhere it was there, even though great fissures were opening at their feet. No tall buildings to topple down, no fires to burn them; only God’s trees in the blessed garden, and now in this hour of horrors another and perhaps greater one befell the doomed city — fires broke out. South and west — first a tall slender shaft of flame darting upward — then another — and another — and yet another, until the sky was red and a pall hung over the southern part of the city. Strange sights were to be seen on all sides, to be recalled and laughed at later by the fortunate ones. A woman with an empty parrot cage pushed and jostled everybody who impeded her progress. A mother frantically grasping her naked baby by one foot came next, the little tot had evidently been interrupted in his bath. Millionaires and hobos walked side by side and exchanged ideas. They were in strangest garb, — pajamas, overcoats, bath robes — one stately gentleman in blue gingham pajamas and a tall silk hat. Women in kimonos, overcoats, shawls, blankets — and many who had wisely dressed in their warmest clothing, instinctively preparing for the unknown trials yet to come. The privileged classes — privileged no longer — fell in line with weary night laborers returning from their work, and all were kindly and helpful one towards another in this exodus. Each recurring terror produced a fresh panic, but as it became evident that they were getting less severe and less frequent that wonderful optimistic spirit of the Californian began to assert itself and everybody began talking to everybody else, telling of their experiences, laughing at themselves and each other. No one believed that any great harm could befall their cherished city. A little quake, a little fire — a scare and nothing more. So they reasoned as they, almost gaily, trod the streets, wending their way towards the park. And many of them dared to return to their abandoned homes and collect necessary clothing and food for themselves and their families. California — great and wonderful

— never so great, or so wonderful as on these days of her calamity, when she rose to undreamed of heights!

CHAPTER XII

IN THE PARK

Among the throng pouring out of the doomed building, borne up by the crowd, unafraid of earthquake or of fire, still unconsciously singing, came Marion. "Though the earth be moved and the mountains fall in the midst of the sea, I will not fear — I will not fear," her voice rang out clear and strong like the call of a bugle — the light of divine faith was in her eyes, her head was carried erect and she might have been Miriam leading the victorious hosts in the great deliverance, so noble was her mien. No longer "Sweetheart" the little country girl, she was, as she believed, God's special charge, rescued from great peril at her call. She did not question. She only believed. As her clear and triumphant voice rang out, the people passed and looked in wonder at this girl who could sing in the face of this great calamity. Among the throng hurrying, pushing, rushing with the rest, was one who knew that voice, who had carefully trained it in gentler times and more peaceful scenes. He was pushed by the crowd almost into her arms. One glance, one glad cry of "Gilbert, Gilbert," and her arms were thrown around his neck. All heroism was gone. She was no longer the triumphant Miriam singing her hymn of gratitude for deliverance, only a poor forlorn little country girl with fluffy, flying hair crying on his shoulders. "Take me home, oh, take me home! I have been so frightened." And then and there a strange thing happened to Gilbert Lee, the middle-aged artist he who was "wedded to his art." With lightning rapidity before him passed the summers in Ahwahnee; he saw again the desolate little child — the growing girl — the sweet and pretty maiden with whom he had so often played and studied and rode among the mountains and valleys of her home, and he knew — as her clinging arms were about his neck and her tremulous voice besought his help that here — here — in all this tumult, with the earth trembling under his feet and

the skies red with dooming flame — when all were leaving all their possessions and fleeing to save their lives — that he had found the pearl of great price, the one woman in the world for him. More destructive than the earthquake, more devastating than the fires raging beyond, destroying and uprooting all his future plans, in the glance of an eye, the cry of a voice, the touch of a maid's arms — in a moment's time was this miracle wrought.

But not here or now was the place or time for loving. Gently disengaging her arms and still holding her hands he drew her a little way out beyond the crowd and said, "My little Sweetheart, how came you here?"

"Take me away," she sobbed, "I have had a great and terrible deliverance. Take me home, Gilbert, take me home."

Noting her nervous condition, Gilbert asked no more questions but gently soothed her. "Come, come, my brave little girl, we must move on. The crowd will trample on us if we don't. You are quite safe now with me. I was on my way to the Park to find my sister Mollie and her family. They must be under the trees somewhere by now. We'll soon find them. Brace up, little Sweetheart."

They threaded their way towards the Park where already, with true American optimism and pluck, families were beginning to settle in groups, under the budding trees, rigging up tents of shawls, coats, blankets, awnings, anything that could be procured readily, and children who had been roused from sleep one short hour before were already laughing and playing in happy ignorance of the terrible drama being enacted in their beloved city. Like some Mayday festival the street was thronged with a cosmopolitan crowd, all headed for the Park as promising most safety. Nobody for one moment believed that the earthquake and fires were very serious; true, a few houses had fallen and a few fires started, but that was all. The fire department had never yet failed to subdue fires and would not now; and as for the earthquake, that was soon over. Marion clung to Gilbert's hand like the country child she was, and after a weary walk they came to a little group sheltered by a clump of acacias — in full and fragrant bloom — Mollie Archambeau and her three children — Gilbert, four years old, a slender hand-

some, graceful boy; little Billy, chubby and stocky, ready even now to demand and fight for his rights; and a pretty baby girl laughing and crooning in her mother's arms. The husband Prof. Giles Archambeau — tall, slender, precise, wearing a pince-nez — as carefully dressed as though he had just emerged from his dressing room, was already busy getting his camera in working order to take the first photographs of the doomed city, and in his mind's eye he saw his book (the earliest published) bring him great honor and some coin. He was a photographer, writer, poet and dilettante, generally and incidentally a kind husband and father — never given to collecting much of the root of all evil (and good), or to worrying much because he had it not. He greeted Gilbert and Marion, and explained that he must "rush things" while the town was so alive and the fires burning, and would Gilbert "see to Mother and children?"

Gilbert smiled, kissed his sister and the boys and drew Marion into the circle. Mollie was laughing and talking to the babies. She was a round, rosy, smiling, brown-eyed little woman — the sweetest thing on earth — a cheerful, unselfish, loving wife and mother, and Gilbert loved her dearly. He commended Marion to her care and then left to begin a search, which was to last for many weary hours, for his brother Charlie, and some wagon or vehicle of any sort to move their trunks from their deserted home. To Marion this happy family group was a revelation. She had never known children except the curled and pampered darlings who occasionally toured the valley with their parents, and the little black-eyed papooses in their beaded Indian cradles — and these children, so different from those, were a joy to her. She was so cordially included in the family that before an hour had passed she felt at home. Little Gilbert and Billy were listening to her stories, and the baby was coaxed to her knee. Mollie unobtrusively, but none the less carefully, regarded her with a loving sister's intuition. Something in the glance of her brother's eye — the tone of his voice, the protecting hand with which he led Marion to her — informed her that here was no stranger casually encountered and brought to her to be cared for, but a maiden to be cherished — her brother's first love — whether she knew it or not — and Mollie was sure

she did not. She was an innocent, high-minded girl; unused to the world and its ways and should be her special care, and if in her innocent heart Mollie felt a little jealous that the one to whom she had so long been first should now in his mature manhood turn to this young girl, she made no sign.

Those days in the Park when the heavens ringed them around with flames, blood red; and clouds of smoke hid the sun from their eyes as the fires unsubdued still raged; spreading, spreading and everspreading, leaping streets, doubling up fireproof sky-scrapers like children's toys! Now they crossed Market Street — now another and another, until everybody cried out that South San Francisco was doomed, but Van Ness Avenue would bound it; and when, defying all power and all prophecy — when the wells cracked by the 'quake gave out, and no water was to be had, and firemen and helpers stood helpless and saw that devastating fire shoot straight across the broad and beautiful avenue, the high wind carrying sparks and burning coals in its wake, a great and bitter cry arose; but again, California to the Rescue! Wet blankets were spread over homes that might yet be spared; blast after blast told of blowing up of houses to save others. All day and all night they labored, these men of the West; hungry and weary and sleepless, counting none of these privations if only at last they could save their beloved city. Police were organized, deputies sworn in, crooks were shot down on sight. No water was to be had, no fire, no lights, and for three days and nights the city woke and slept and woke again to such discomfort as they had never known, but even the children accepted the situation with wonderful stoicism. They laughed and played and slept under the trees on the soft sward, and so far had enough food to quiet hunger. Somehow Mollie had procured a little oil stove, some sausage from a meat shop as yet unburned, and some rolls from a baker's wagon. The red-hot, sizzling "dogs," sandwiched between the halves of a roll, made breakfast ready. How good it was! Never had Marion tasted anything so delicious as those sausage sandwiches, and the children agreed. Like children, they all ate their impromptu meal, laughed and sang, and all the people about them were doing the same thing. The wonderful California spirit was abroad. They were "making the

best of it." Every little while another tremor shook the earth, fiercer and wilder grew the fires which laid proud San Francisco low, and yet on the sidewalks and in the streets this marvelous people laughed and chatted and fried sausages for breakfast, or went without, if none were to be had, cheering themselves and their friends and not once giving way to sorrow or despair. Gilbert was gone many hours, then he reappeared, tired and footsore, to ask if they had seen Charlie. No, they had not. "I don't worry about him," said Gilbert. "He's sure to turn up all right somewhere, but I must find him and beg, borrow or steal some kind of a wagon to transport my canvases and your trunks to some safer place," and he was gone again.

The sun rose high in that strange looking sky. Smoke from the various fires rose in long and wavering lines like the coils of some mighty serpent encircling the city; the noon hour came and passed, and the long twilight was upon them and still under the trees they waited and watched. As the fire ate its way, roaring, leaping, ever bursting its bounds, and firemen stood helpless for lack of water; when the low rumble of the earth beneath their feet and the sharp, detonating blasts of dynamite, as house after house was blown up, and the savage roar of the ever-rushing fires broke upon the silence of that beautiful park, the crowd, so brave and so hopeful until now, grew quiet and gathered their little ones closer to their arms. They began to realize that a great and awful calamity was upon them — that devastation and death had come into their midst. Men left the streets and parks and offered their services as firemen and deputy policemen; women had fearlessly re-entered their abandoned homes and packed trunks, baskets, sheets, anything to be had, with necessary and most needed clothes. All superfluous luxuries were left. In that hour all silverware, bric-à-brac, pictures and jewelry seemed so trivial and needless that, without a sigh of regret, they were abandoned. Then began the screech — screech of dragging trunks and boxes over the pavements, which sounded ceaselessly all day and all night. Mothers returned, weary and hungry, to their children left in the park or on the hills — many weeping for friends they could not find. Three days — no light, but little water and less food. In all

that time no face was washed. The precious water was hoarded too carefully. In the evening of the first day Gilbert returned with Charlie, whom he had found fighting fires. He looked it — hands black and blistered, face scarred from falling timbers and smudged besides, clothes torn and burnt — but with the undying twinkle in his bright blue eyes; Charlie with the high-bridged nose and mouth drooping at the corners, the born humorist, the jolliest companion, always telling some story to somebody — gay and reckless and dear to his family. Marion had seen him several times when he had come to the valley to see Gilbert and now greeted him with joy. "Hello, Sweetheart!" he cried with a rollicking chuckle. "When I heard you were here, I hurried so fast that the wind blew straight through my ribs."

"Uncle Charlie," whispered Gilbert, Jr., "how could the wind blow through your ribs?"

"Like it was a picket fence, Gilbert, my lad — but, Sweetheart, what a great girl, and pretty too — just a match for your Uncle Charles. Wish I might find some water nearer than the Pacific Ocean to wash up a bit. Mollie, good girl, let me have a few drops of that precious fluid. Giles got a pail somewhere and will get some more. How's my brave boy?" — to Gilbert, Jr., climbing on his knee — "and little Billie" — lifting him up and giving him a resounding kiss which that young gentleman fiercely resented — "and my baby. I declare ain't this a picnic? I've brought some grub, let's have supper."

From one pocket he dislodged a loaf of bread, from another a bottle of milk and a long string of bologna sausages. The children greeted each parcel with a yell of joy.

"Where did you get them, Uncle Charlie?" asked Gilbert, Jr.

"Well, you see, Gilbert, Jr., as I was passing a bakery a window fell in and so did I, and when I came out all that bread came too."

"But the sausages — the sausages, Uncle Charlie?"

"Oh, the sausages — well, that window wasn't so obliging, but I chanced to see a butcher making off with his meat to a safe place. I offered to help — and I canned the sausages —"

Laughing as everybody always did at Charlie's nonsense, not

so much at what he said as his way of saying it, Mollie arranged the simple meal — but it was a silent crowd except the children that sat about on the grass and ate the purloined sausages.

Then the men went again to fight fire, and when they returned and laid down under the improvised tents and shadowing trees they spoke no word of cheer.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CALL

Those wonderful nights under the shelter of the Park, when the families gathered in groups — millionaires and laborers, side by side — lying under the trees, the placid moon riding high in the heavens and the stars glowing with unusual brilliancy! Little Gilbert, lying in his uncle's arms, was chiefly interested in this new experience. "Uncle Charlie," said he, "don't you love to lie in the open and listen to the still? I wish we could stay here forever and forever — I have such great thoughts."

"Great thoughts, Gilbert? What great thoughts do you have, lad?"

"Well, I think the moon up there must be God's hand blessing the people, like the minister does in church, and I think He has lighted all those little stars because we haven't any other lights; and, Uncle Charlie, I was thinking of a boy I saw to-day. He slew a cat with a stone, and I told him, 'You've taken what you can never give back — you've taken a *life*,' and he said, 'Rot.' What is life, Uncle Charlie?"

"Life — Gilbert — why life is — that's the question wise men have been asking through the ages and I've never heard the answer yet."

"Uncle Charlie?"

"Now look here, lad, if you don't shut up and go to sleep you can't go to the city with me to-morrow."

Instantly the little philosopher was all boy. "Oh, may I, uncle? Will Mother let? I'm asleep already!"

"Headed him off that time!" ejaculated Charlie, *sotto voce*. "Thank the Lord."

When morning dawned half the city was in ruins. At early dawn Charlie started out to find a conveyance of some kind to rescue their baggage from the street. About noon he returned with an old express wagon and an older horse. "Here we are, ladies and gentlemen, trunks and boxes, bags and baggage. I bought the wagon and stole the horse or bought the horse and stole the wagon, I don't know which, and I met Colonel Bury on the street and he insinuated that if we could get to the Presidio our Uncle Sam might wink at our using a cottage and perhaps feed us into the bargain. I saw Giles out on the hillside taking pictures, and I think he's forgotten that he ever had a family. I found Gil and sent him on ahead to pre-empt that cottage, so, good people, let's trek."

As Charlie's news was retailed, not alone the Archambeau family but scores of others took up the trail towards the Presidio. Mollie and the babies were stowed in the little wagon between boxes and bales. Marion, Gilbert, Jr., and Charlie headed the procession, for cars there were none, and the old horse ambled along at his own sweet will with an occasional reminder from Charlie. It was a long and weary walk, but at its end they climbed the broad wooden steps and so to the broad walk fronting the officers' quarters, with great relief, for here was at least a temporary shelter. Gilbert stood at the door of a small wooden structure dignified by the name of cottage, and joyfully hailed them. In this place sixteen refugees found their home, and thankfully settled down — water was scarce, no fires were permitted, but provisions were supplied by the commissary. Such was the condition of affairs the fourth day after the earthquake. Soon, however, things began to mend; they had water again, could build a fire and cook their simple meals, and then their buoyant nature asserted itself and everybody was or tried to be, gay. The children had one glorious picnic — fires, loss of friends and homes and money meant nothing to them. They sang and skipped and ran races on that famous broad walk all day long, and when night came cuddled down on the floor in instant slumber. Once an Italian drifted in with a hand-organ, and everybody flocked around to listen to that erstwhile despised music. As he stood on the parade ground and played, sur-

rounded by children and grown-ups as well, the familiar strains of the Blue Danube waltz struck little Gilbert's ear. It recalled his own phonograph, and his and Billie's daily recreation of dancing around the dining-room table at home to that music. He began to circle around and then, forgetful of his surroundings, to dance — lightly as a leaf blown by a zephyr his little feet, seeming not to touch the sward, flew to the merry tune, gracefully waving his little arms above his head, keeping perfect time on and on, around and around he danced — now here, now there, a lovely vision of childish grace and joy — and following him conscientiously, doing his level best, trudged Billie, his chubby arms folded over his plump little "tummy" his serious face earnestly frowning, regardless of time or tune, around and around, following his brother's flying feet, went little Billie. The grown-ups joined in uproarious laughter, but on and on to the end of the tune the two children danced. "Mother-er," complained Gilbert, "Billie don't dance; he just walks just like a horse. What does Billie know of the Blue Danube time"

After that every afternoon the hand organ man ground out the Blue Danube waltz and the children danced. Gilbert in the lead and annoyed almost beyond endurance because (to his trained ear) the dancers did not keep time.

"Mother," he complained, "they haven't any music in their souls. Can't they see the steps in the music?"

"They never had a phonograph, many of them, Gilbert, or your advantages. You must remember that and be patient," counseled his mother.

To Marion this child-life was something new and strange and she revelled in it. Sitting on the wide steps of the board walk, surrounded by children, she would tell them stories of the birds and beasts of the valley, of the Indian life in the camps, and she would sing in her sweet and lovely voice, modulated to its softest tones, the hymns and songs which she had sung in the Valley. With little Billie in her lap and Gilbert, Jr., leaning over her shoulders, Gilbert Lee saw her one afternoon when he came in, weary and cold and hungry, from the fire zone, and he thought that he had never seen a lovelier sight. He reported that at last the fire was under control and that all men were busy

removing wreckage, digging for lost and missing friends, striving to uncover the bank vaults which were believed to be intact (and afterwards proved so), and that once again the citizens of that desolated city had risen in their might to rebuild it.

April ripened into May, violets and columbines began to bloom, liverwort and spring beauties carpeted the woodlands; cedars and pines pushed out tender green plumes; azaleas and burning bush burst into glorious flowers; geraniums, hedges showed a thousand scarlet buds, and the sweet, warm, life-giving sunshine of California spring beamed upon the land. In every fence corner the gold of the California poppy glowed, and in every tree the mockers and robins and blue birds made merry. In the middle of the month the Archambeau family rented a small apartment at an exorbitant rental in the northern part of the city, and it was with genuine regret that they left the Presidio to return to the sadness and desolation of the city. Marion, at Mollie's earnest invitation, went with the family to their new home, but when they were settled, their few rescued belongings disposed to best advantage in the cottage and their scant wearing apparel re-made as best they could, she began to get restless and to long for her own home. Mollie had her husband and children, Gilbert his art, and Charlie was seldom at home. He had taken a room nearer town and was busy morning, noon and night drawing plans, overseeing new buildings, springing like mushrooms from the ashes of the old, and Marion felt alone. One morning standing at her bedroom window, heartsick for the only home and friends she had ever known — facing towards her beloved valley and longing with her whole heart for its shelter again — suddenly — she knew not how, or from whence, came the sound but it was distinct and clear, "Marion, come! come!" and again, "Marion, come quick! come!" She knew it for the voice of her hermit friend. How she knew she could not have told, for she had never heard his voice except in the few Indian words he sometimes used, but when that call came appealing, insisting, commanding, she cried out in answer, "I will come! I am coming! Wait for me!" and decided that she must at once obey that earnest call. To Mollie's dissuasion she answered nothing but quietly packed her little suit-case, kissed them all gratefully, thanked Mollie, left

love for the boys and was off on the next train in answer to that cry which she alone had heard.

CHAPTER XIV

MARION'S RETURN

Marion hoped to meet Tom at Raymond with the stage, and so it turned out. Bluff and hearty, cheery and affectionate, as of old, Tom joyfully greeted her and, seated beside him on the box, Marion, for the first time since leaving her beloved valley, felt at home.

"How are they all, Tom? How's Dandy?"

"He's fine, skittish as a young colt, and, say, they're cleanin' up the house ready for business in great shape —"

"And Mandy, Tom?"

Tom chewed a straw reflectively. "Mandy? Oh, she's well — Mandy. Well, you see, Sweetheart, Mandy is still standoffish a little, but I'll rope her in yet. I'm a Jim Dandy gentlin' hawses and I reckon I can gentle a woman critter, give me time."

Marion laughed. "You've been at it some years, Tom."

"Yes, I know, but you ain't never heard me say I've give up, have you, Sweetheart? No, and you never will. Mandy now ain't so young by some years as she was, and she don't get no handsomer. I never could rightly make out why I want to marry her, but the fact is — I do. P'raps it's because she is so darned standoffish — I do'no' I'm sure, but I'll gentle her yet, you'll see. What's bringing you back so soon, Sweetheart — afraid of the 'quake?"

"I think I was a little, and I got homesick, Tom. I want to see the old home, and Mandy and my hermit. Have you seen him lately?"

"No — don't know's I have. A little while back I saw that squaw Ahweiha sittin' out on the road with her head in her blanket and she said she guessed that Calah was agoin' to the Happy Hunting Ground before many moons — that the Great Spirit was callin' him, which lingo, I take it, may mean that Calah, or whatever his name may be, is sick and she thinks he's goin' to die maybe — though for that matter he's been dead

such a lot o' times that there'd ought to be a bury'n. He's all'a's been a harmless old chap and done nobody any harm, nor no good either, so far's I know, but I guess he's a goin' to die this time."

"I knew it, Tom," said Marion softly. "I was sure he was going to die."

"You knew it, Sweetheart; how could you? Who told you?"

"A little bird, Tom, and I came straight home. I'm so glad I'm in time."

Not comprehending her meaning Tom delicately changed the subject. "Bill and Mandy's been doin' very well with the house, and Dandy's fit as a fiddle, I saw to him."

"Thank you, Tom. I'll go home and stay overnight and in the morning will go and see Calah —"

"That'll be best. I didn't gather from the squaw that there was much danger of his goin' right off and maybe her judgment's not correct."

And now they were at Wanona — and now again on the road, climbing, climbing, up and up, higher and still higher, around the glories of mountain and waterfall and clouds — where the air seemed to effervesce and sparkle like champagne — where the flowers bloomed in sheets of fragrance and every foot of the way was one grand triumphal march into the mysteries and wonders of a land newly discovered.

The few tourists who were of the party were full of enthusiasm and delight, and Tom pointed out with his whip the objects of interest as they journeyed. These trips were never tedious to Tom. "You see," he would explain, "it's all'a's new, I guess it's that that makes me like it so. One day the sun shines and the flowers come out, and the next day maybe it's misty and a veil seems over it all. Old El Capitan there looks like a shadow mountain, and when it rains, and all the trees are drip-pin' and green, its more beautiful, I think, than at any other time."

Late in the afternoon Marion sprang lightly from her seat by Tom, ran first to the little corral where she saw Dandy, fat and well favored, cropping the early herbage; called him by name and was answered by a delighted whinney. She put her

arms about his neck and he nozzled her face with joy, and this homely greeting made Marion's heart glad. She felt stronger and happier and more capable of facing life than she had since her foster parents' death, and the awfulness of her city experiences slipped into the background of her memory. She began to sing, and this time it was a hymn of joy. At the door stood Mandy — tall, angular, uncompromising — waiting until Marion should recognise the fact of her existence; and Tom, coming from the barn where he had been seeing to his horses, saw her standing there — waiting, waiting, always waiting. Something of pity stirred the good fellow's heart.

"Hello, Mandy! Glad to see you. Shake hands. Marion, let that horse alone and come and speak to Mandy."

Marion turned, saw Mandy and ran to her; hugged and kissed her unresponsive cheek and cried, "Mandy, I've come home, I'm so glad."

"There, there, child, don't muss my collar! Be off with you and get the dust off your clothes. You're quite a sight."

"Mandy," said Tom, "I'm waitin'."

Mandy's face actually took on a brick red flush.

"You'll get tired of waitin' I reckon," she said. "I cal'late in a few more years you'll get a little mite of sense."

"Got it now," said Tom, giving the angular shoulders a good natured shake. "Know a good thing when I see it and mean to have it soon or late."

"It'll be late enough," snapped Mandy. "I'm goin' in"—and she did.

In the morning Marion, mounted on her beloved Dandy, rode to the little cabin where Calah had for so many years made his home. Ahweiha was sitting on the step outside the door — the portcullis was down, and there was an air of sadness about the place. The squaw sat with her head buried in her blanket, her whole attitude one of grief and despair. Putting her hand gently on her shoulder and speaking in her own language, Marion said, "Ahweiha, I am here. He called and I came."

The squaw gently rose from her seat. "I know," she replied, "he called all the time. He called 'Marion, Marion, come,' and you here, he no stay. The Great Spirit calls also, and the white God goes to his own."

Together they entered the cabin. A dull fire was burning on the hearth. The sick man lying on his couch of skins was muttering incoherently: his flaming black eyes seemed supernaturally bright in contrast with the pallor of his face. He looked long and searchingly at the girl, and for the first time in many years spoke in his own language. "Marion," he said, "you are come. I knew you would come when I called you."

"Ah, ah, he spek Inglis!" ejaculated Ahweiha. "He not know you—he think you his squaw. Let him alone."

Marion gently placed her hand on his forehead. "I heard you call when I was a long way off and I came at once, I knew your voice"—and now he was a long way off also, back in the days of his early love and it was, "Marion, do you remember,"—little incidents of their early acquaintance hesitatingly and lingeringly recalled. "Do you remember the first time I held your hand? It was a London fog. So thick that we nearly lost our way. The lamps shone with a dull, greenish light and you put your hand in mine as we walked—such a soft, tender little hand it was, Marion, and it fluttered like a little bird. I held it, Marion, close, and wished that walk would never end—and then—Marion dearest—come closer—do you mind the night it rained so hard and I took you home under my umbrella and at the door—a light was in the window and it lighted your face as you lifted it to thank me—do you mind—my dearest—under that umbrella I stooped and kissed your lips—and you were not angry, Marion. I knew it was a great sin and all night I wrestled in prayer, but in all those awful hours I felt the soft warm touch of your lips, and I could not be sorry."

And now he was again in the stone house at home with "Mither" and his tongue took on the Scotch burr so long forgotten; he was walking to the kirk with Mither, his hand in hers, or gathering the golden gorse for her, or fishing in the burn, and through all these wanderings, "His ways were ways of pleasantness and all His paths were peace." It was as though through the "deep waters" he had come into the "green meadow." Marion and Ahweiha listened and mar-

velled to see his face grow brighter and younger, the old lines of care and despondency disappear, and he sometimes laughed in a boyish way as he recalled some boyish prank. Then it was Mither who filled his thoughts, Mither who tucked him in at night and said, "God keep you, laddie, 'til the morn." Mither who baked the oaten cakes which he so loved; Mither who was always tender and true and loving. Of his father he never spoke.

Ahweiha tidied up the room, and Marion bathed her hermit's face and brushed the snow-white hair falling in soft, silken waves to his shoulders until it shone and glistened like a silver fleece. She had brought necessary comforts from the Inn and together they robed him in a soft and pretty dressing gown until, lying at peace, his weary head resting on the snowy pillow, the Hermit of the Valley seemed a different man. "Sing, sing, my Marion," he murmured, and Marion sang, soft and low, the old, old lullaby,

"Sleep, sleep, while billows creep,
Over the slumbering sands."

Slowly the ivory lids drooped over the black eyes, and, holding Marion's hand close clasped, he slept. Afraid to move lest it disturb the sleeper, Marion sat beside the couch long hours, and when the door opened softly she did not turn until a hand was laid upon her shoulder and then she saw Gilbert Lee. Ever thoughtful, he had followed her on the next train and had come to share her vigil. As he stood looking at the sleeping man, memory awoke, somehow the face was strangely familiar to him; surely he knew that high and narrow forehead, that oval, delicate profile, those long and slender hands folded on his breast. When, where, had he seen this man before? As he gazed, the Hermit opened his eyes — those brilliant flaming black eyes lighted his face like a beacon — and then he knew — he knew. He saw again the young father with the little child in his arms in the office of the Valley Inn; again he saw that bright and sunny little girl-wife by his side, gaily laughing at some sally of the Judge, and even while those unseeing eyes seemed to pierce his soul he knew that here was the long lost man — the husband of Marion Campbell, lost so

many years ago on the mountains — the father of Marion standing by his side.

“Little girl,” he questioned softly, “why did you not wait for me? I would have brought you.”

“I could not wait, Gilbert. He called me and I came at once. He thinks that I am his wife, and he calls her Marion.”

Gilbert hesitated before he spoke again. In his own mind he was certain of the man’s identity, but he must be sure. “Ask Ahweiha if Calah has any of the things he had when she first saw him?” he requested Marion, and in reply Ahweiha brought from some mysterious nook a suit of clothes, old and moth-eaten, but in the pockets Gilbert found return tickets from the Valley, a small roll of money, and a diary. He silently examined these proofs of Calah’s identity with David Campbell and then he spoke to the sick man: “David Campbell, I’m sorry to see you so sick.”

“David! David! That’s my name, and, Marion, come here, wee wifie — hold my hand,” and so babbling contentedly, forgetting all the sorrows and the loneliness of the years between, David Campbell, holding the hand of his daughter and thinking it the hand of his girl-wife, closed his flashing eyes upon all earthly scenes, and slept. Ahweiha, covering her head with her blanket, sang the death song of her people, and Gilbert and Marion, awed beyond expression by the sudden passing of the soul and the Indian’s lament, stood in silence by the couch. In the morning, learning by that strange telepathy of their “White God’s” passing away, his Indian friends, who had so revered and cared for him, held a solemn council and their chiefs, appareled with all the magnificence of an ambassador, and his aids, came to Marion in the little cabin and requested that they might be permitted to bury Calah with the honors of their tribe. Gilbert Lee was there. “Speak to them, Ahweiha, and tell them that it cannot be.” But Marion interposed, “I can speak their language and they will understand better.” So she stood upon the cabin step a little above them and called them about her. She told them of the dreadful death of her young mother, of her father’s flight into the mountains and gratefully thanked them for their care of him. “The Great Spirit, she said, “had kindly taken from him all memory

of that awful night and sent him to you, great chieftains of a great nation, and you understood. Your corn flourished — your wigwams were full of meat. The streams were full of fish and the grasshoppers came by the thousands into your traps — and you knew that the White God's blessing brought prosperity, and now his spirit thanks you. He was my father, though I did not know it. I have grown up among you and loved you, and I ask you to let him lie in the little graveyard beside his young wife whom he so loved and who was so cruelly killed, and I want you, chieftains and underchiefs and all your tribes, to come and stand beside his grave and bid him God-speed on the strange journey where no man may follow until the Great Spirit calls him. I hold you in my heart of hearts for your goodness to him and your love for me, your White Lily." She ceased and they crowded about her. "We will do all that Calah and the white lily wishes, O daughter of the White God — and we will sorrow all night by our own camp fire for the going away of the White-God. His o'chum is empty — our hearts are sad."

That night, in the little valley of the Yosemite where he had first come to them, they all gathered, lighted their camp fires and, painted with all the insignia of mourning, told of the virtues of the dead, of the great and wonderful prosperity his coming among them had brought, and sang their mournful death songs. As the fires died down to a dull red glow, when strange shadows lurked among the trees and the moon fitfully shone through the branches, their chosen men danced the dance of death. In the outskirts their women moaned the death songs — pointing to the West and carrying the refrain "Hem — la'-ha!" until they were exhausted, when others would take their places — and though they could not burn the body to keep away all evil spirits as they wished to do, they could and did burn all the beautiful rugs and baskets and deer-skin suits which they had lavished upon him, to speed his happy soul to the El-o'-win of the distant West — the land of the Happy Hunting Grounds.

So David Campbell was buried beside his girl wife in the little grave yard — the burial service read by a touring clergyman. The chiefs and underchiefs magnificently dressed, with

painted faces, stood in a circle about the grave and listened respectfully — and when the last clod fell they buried their faces in their blankets and turned away. In the background stood the squaws and the older children of the tribe, Ahweiha among them, their bright blankets making a brilliant band of color against the sombre pines. Gilbert took Marion's hand. Mandy and Tom walked beside her as they left the little enclosure, and silently they went to the Inn. Again, Gilbert felt that it was no time to speak of his own hopes and was silent. Charlie had come down for the funeral and his was the hand that covered the new-made grave with spruce boughs and flowers — his the care that removed all vestige of the funeral from the room before Marion came back to her desolate home.

CHAPTER XV

ANGUS CAMPBELL

Not twenty miles from Edinburgh the little village of Althol lies half buried in verdure. Ragged hills surround it, and a noisy little burn with waters clear as a diamond, rushes and gurgles under its bridges through its street. Set back from the little unpaved street stood a stone cottage, overgrown with roses. It seemed a bird's house with its tiny windows, and the walk to the gate was scrubbed white as marble. Here lived Angus Campbell and his wife Jeane — here was born David, their only child, and yonder at the top of the street, its steeple ever pointing upward, was the chapel where David was baptised, where he had made his solemn vows, and from which he was expelled when he broke them — his own father with sterling honesty and Spartan heroism preferring the charges which disgraced his son in the little chapel. In the cozy kitchen of this cottage one night in the early fall sat Angus Campbell and his wife. A great fire glowed and flamed in the open fireplace. The boiling kettle hanging from the crane in the chimney sang its cheerful song, and Jeane had cleared away the tea things and taken her knitting. She was a placid, sweet-faced woman, and her gray hair glinted like silver in the light of the lamp as she knitted her man's long blue stocking. Angus had been

reading the Book, and his hand still rested caressingly on its leathern cover as it lay on the stand beside him. He was an elder in his kirk and had just returned from a conference held in a neighboring town. He was a large-framed man with a heavy thatch of iron gray hair brushed back from a broad and massive brow; bushy gray eyebrows almost met over the steel blue eyes; and the thin lips were set closely together, the square jaw and a certain inflexibility of face told the story of his firmness, or obstinacy, as friend or foe decided. He had not broken silence since the reading of the word, and the faint click-click of the needles as his wife diligently knitted was the only sound in the room. To Jeane, used to her man's ways for so many years, the hour was fraught with possibilities — and she waited — as she had learned to wait — for him to speak. Finally, when the silence had become almost unbearable, he began to speak — slowly and in broad Scotch which I cannot reproduce, nor can I the deep and powerful voice of the man accustomed to deference and attention, whose every word was carefully weighed before it was uttered even at his own fireside and with his wife for his only listener.

“We had a fine meeting,” he began, “and the Lord was with us. Andy McCallum, and John Stuart and Hector McDonald were all there, and Angus McLain led the meeting. Woman! It was grand! He read ——” the man's voice sank and he spoke with a sort of reluctance — “the story of the Prodigal Son. My word! but he read well, and it was as if I could see that poor and wicked young man, hungry and ragged and dirty, with his staff in his hand staggering along the highway — going home — in rags — in disgrace — in poverty — he who had gone out so gaily with his best clothes on and his money in his hand. Such a bright, handsome and bonny lad unheeding his father's counsel and his father's sorrow — coming home — and then it was as if his father had been waiting and watching for him all the years that he was gone — and he saw him afar off — and he ran — yes, ran, that old man who had been so be-fooled and neglected — whose substance the lad had wasted in riotous living — ran to him. He didn't see the dirt or the rags — only the hunger in the lad's eyes and he never let him get farther than, ‘Father, I have

sinned' before he had him in his arms, crying and kissing him and so bringing him back into his own home again — in honor and gladness. 'Bring the best robe, put a ring on his hand. Kill the fatted calf.' Oh, it was wonderful! wonderful. There wasn't a dry eye in the room — and then —" the man's voice sank lower — closer grew his clasp on the beloved Book — he said, "Mark this Jeane — that there were prodigal fathers as well as prodigal sons — fathers who made themselves judges instead of letting the Almighty do the judging — and who were all for punishing God's sons in their human way thinking they did God service. He said such a father would never have run out to meet that son; he would have said, 'You've made your bed — lie in it,' and shut the door of his heart and his house against him, and when the poor lad came begging bread he'd give him a stone, and, Jeane — I thought of the lad, and I knew that I was one of the prodigal fathers he was telling about, and I wanted to run — run hard and fast until I found my son and say to him, 'I have sinned.'" Angus straightened in his chair, his voice lifted and his eyes glowed under their bushy brows. "I thought, as I sat there, who was I to punish the lad because he broke his vow to his God, as if God couldn't take care of his own honor, and I saw that poor bit lassie alone in the wicked London streets and I knew, Jeane — yes, I did — that if it had been you my lass, I'd thought shame of myself if I didn't do what the lad did. Eh! but I was hard. I took his name from the Book and shut the door in his face, and till to-night have never let his name be named in his own home." Jeane was sitting silent, still knitting, unseeing the long blue stocking, tears running unchecked down her face. "I put myself —" Angus went on — "in the place of the Almighty and condemned the poor lad, and now it's over late to mend it. A little seed of sin grows full soon to a great tree of crime."

And now Jeane was at his feet, clasping his knees and crying between her tears, "Angus, Angus, dear lad, I know you thought you were right, but, oh, my man — my man, I have hungered and thirsted and prayed for my lost lad all these weary years. Where is he and how is he faring? Whiles his father and his mother live in plenty, goes he wanting?"

"I think," resumed Angus, "that it was his words and the story and all to-day and — Get up, my lass, there's more to come. As I went with John into Hector McDonald's store to get your bit things I saw a London paper lying on the bench and my name in print and it said — wait a second — here it is." From his pocket he took a crumpled slip of paper and read, "If Angus Campbell or any relative of David Campbell who left the Theological School in Edinburgh in the year 18— will communicate with Gilbert Lee, San Francisco, California, he or they can learn news of David Campbell." "This," said the old man, "is the Lord's doings and it is marvelous in our sight: Let us pray." He rose to his feet, closed his eyes and lifted his hands. "Heavenly Father — forgive my sins — grant me pardon, and wisdom to undo what in my blindness and hardness of heart I have done. Let Thy hand lie lightly on the mither of the lad who aye sorrowed and could not be comforted, and, O God of our fathers, let Thy hand lead me and Thy counsel guide until I find the lad again and bring him in honor unto his own home — and am no more a prodigal father, Amen."

Jeane stood before her husband with a certain dignity. She who had been so sweetly submissive all the cruel years now past seemed to have grown in stature. At her feet lay her knitting unheeded. "This night has the dear Lord come to us," she cried. "Open wide the door and let Him come in." As she spoke she threw the door wide open, and together in awesome silence they stood waiting — waiting for the coming of the Spirit of the Lord. A flood of moonlight beamed upon them — the still small voices of the night alone broke that silence, and as they stood "that peace which passeth all understanding" filled their hearts.

CHAPTER XVI

ANGUS IN SAN FRANCISCO

Two weeks later a tall and angular Scotchman and a timid little dove-colored wife came into Gilbert Lee's studio — a new shack now built further up town on Nob's hill where the

'quake and the fire had spared a few houses. They had come from Scotland, seeking their lost son. The long and, to them, fearful journey had been borne patiently and even cheerfully as a necessary evil, and now that they had reached their destination in safety their only thought was how to find their boy. They saw with awe the traces of destruction by fire and 'quake in the city, and with astonishment the cheerful and energetic work of its rebuilding going on about them. In every quarter hundreds of men were tearing away the falling walls, carting off the debris, lifting the steel and iron structures which had crumpled like tissue paper under the flames, and now lay twisted and doubled like great black snakes in every cellar — digging carefully lest some human body might still rest under the fallen walls. Everywhere the sound of shovel and hammer and axe sounded, loaded wagons crowded the streets — often the explosion of dynamite told of some dangerous building being razed; sometimes they saw disinterred bodies, lying on the sidewalk for identification and both looked eagerly to see if by any chance one of them might be the son they were seeking. As in their native village side by side, walked the pair; careless alike of passersby and criticism, obsessed by the one great quest — undisturbed by the novelty of their surroundings or its difficulties: and now they stood in the presence of the man who could tell them of David. In his old velveteen coat, palette in hand, he stood before his easel, a fine and noble specimen of the American man. It was never Angus Campbell's way to beat about the bush.

Declining the proffered chair, he advanced and holding out the torn and crumpled advertisement which had guided them to this place, said, "I am Angus Campbell of Althol, an elder in the old kirk, and this is my wife Jeane. In a miraculous way I saw this notice in an old paper and we have come at once to take our David home. It's over late I know and I alone am to blame, but what I can do to right the wrong that will I do."

And the mother clasping and unclasping her thin hands in supplication, pled with eyes and tremulous lips and tender voice, "Oh, sir, tell me where to find our laddie, lang — lang years ago we lost him, and my heart has sair grieved for him

ever since. I do so long to see his bonny face. Tell us where we may find our lad, and God will bless you — surely he will.”

Sorrowfully, Gilbert took her two hands in his and placed her in a chair. “Sit down, dear lady, and you, sir, sit down. It’s a long story and I’ll tell you the whole of it. Your dear lad, a lad no longer, but a world-weary man with hair as white as snow, has passed away, and you must not grieve that you cannot take him to your home for he has gone to a better one. He had friends good and true beside him and, let this comfort your heart — father and mother” — how gentle was Gilbert’s calling of their names — “in his last hours he was again in his old home and with his mither — your name was ever on his lips — and he has left to you a little lassie — the dearest, sweetest and prettiest girl in the world, and in this child you will find comfort.”

Angus rose abruptly and went to the window, turning his back on the room and its occupants. He looked, unseeing, down upon the ruins of the great city and at its upbuilding — at first unseeing and then with understanding. He — like that mighty city with all hopes wrecked and all prospects laid low — was a ruin; but it was being rebuilt — in sorrow and toil but still rising above its ruins. So might he somehow, in some measure, redeem the past, but the mother, unrestrainedly she wept: “Too late — too late, my lad — my little lad, always I have prayed that you might be brought back to us and never — never have I thought you dead. Did you say, sir, that he left a lassie? Then has the Lord been kind. He has not left our house unto us desolate. Angus — dear man,” she went to him and placed her hand upon his arm beseechingly — “Angus — dear man, the Master has taken our work out of our hands. He has punished us sorely and sorely are we stricken, but, listen, Angus. He has left us a great gift, our Davie’s little maid. Let us go to our son’s grave and see his daughter. She shall be ours. The Lord has put away thy sin. Come, come, dear man — grieve no more. Let us thank God and go on.” Angus turned, and placed his hand over hers. “Let it be so,” he said, “let it be so.”

Gilbert had stood silently near, then he began touching and

retouching the picture upon which he was working. Not then could he say to them that he wanted to rob them of the child, not yet recovered, nor dim their hopes of redeeming the past.

The future with its possibilities and hopes must be left to unfold in its own time. When they were more self-controlled he said, "The hotels are all in ruins. I don't know in all San Francisco where I can get you a place to sleep, but my sister Mollie has a little flat, and I am sure she will gladly make room for you. Come with me and as soon as possible I will go with you to your grand-daughter, and you shall see your son's grave and hear from her the story of his life."

So it came about that the Campbells became guests of the Archambeaus. Mr. Archambeau, with photos completed and book already in press in another city, at once fore-gathered with Angus Campbell. He had spent some years in Scotland in his bachelor days and loved the land. This was a tie between them, and over photographs and book they passed the time. Jeane was at once taken to Mollie's loving heart. She never wearied listening to their praises of Marion, the little unknown "bairnie," upon whom their hopes were now centered. And Mollie's little children — how dear were they to the starved heart of Jeane, who for twenty years had lived her lonely life and in silence and secrecy mourned her son.

One bright September morning, accompanied by Gilbert, they started for the Valley Inn. Already, in a guarded letter, Gilbert had notified Marion of the coming guests, and at Raymond was Tom and his "bronchs." Tom met them joyfully and proclaimed to the dignified and reticent Scotchman his opinion of his grand-daughter. "I tell you here and now she's a peach."

"A what?" queried that gentleman.

"A peach — a pippin, that's what?"

"Do you mean by comparing her to fruit that she is good and bonny?"

"Well, I don't rightly know what you mean by bonny, but you've got the idea all right. She's a whole team and the dog under the wagon. That's a fact."

"I fail," replied the grandfather coldly, "to understand how my grand-daughter can resemble a team and I would be even

more sorry that she can be likened to the dog under the wagon. So long as she is a good bairn we will be satisfied."

Tom whistled through his fingers shrilly and mounted his box, and soon, the stage comfortably filled, they were toiling up the ever-beautiful, ascending road. Gilbert sat by Jeane and pointed out noted or fine bits of scenery as they journeyed. "What do you think of the Valley?" he finally inquired, "How does it compare with Scotland?"

"Ye canna compare them, Mr. Lee. Scotland is as if the Maker loved the work when He made it. He set the purple moors and the golden gorse, and the little burns running and gurgling everywhere and the blue lakes, and He girdled the land with rugged hills and He planted flowers everywhere for the very love of it — but here. Oh, I think he made this land from the majesty of His imagination. I don't know if you'll understand me, sir, but I mean that He *made* Scotland and He *created* the Yosemite." To Angus Campbell the majesty of the mountains appealed greatly, and when he first caught sight of El Capitan, crowned with floating, cumulous clouds, he rose in his seat, removed his hat and repeated, "Lord Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations; before the mountains were brought forth or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God."

CHAPTER XVII

MARION'S LIFE

In the meantime Marion's life flowed gently on like some placid stream, which, broken and fretted by rocks and falls and quicksands, had at length passed onward and now rested in a quiet pool. Her childhood had vanished in the rude awakening of her womanhood. Events had followed each other in such rapid succession that she now stood bewildered and dazed upon the threshold of her new life; her foster-mother's death followed soon by that of her foster-father, her trip to the great unknown world beyond the horizon of the valley, so eagerly longed for, so disastrously attained; that awful night of glamor and of horror — the earthquake and the fires; her wonderful

deliverance, as she believed, in answer to her frenzied prayer, and Gilbert's opportune appearance; that beautiful life in the Park with Mollie and the children, and Charlie. Ah, yes, Charlie had made her laugh — had lifted her out of the depths of woe by his gaiety — and Gilbert — he was her savior — a friend always at hand, a staff upon which to lean — and now she was again alone. Only Mandy and Tom and Dandy remained of her old life. The Kennedys were running the house, and it seemed no longer home. From early morn, often until the evening shadows began to gather, she and her beloved Dandy wandered. His years sat lightly upon his head and he was still as skittish as in his colt-hood. Up, up, among the cool and fragrant mountain-passes they went — pausing now to listen to some bird, to watch the little ouzels darting in and out of the spray at some fall into the dainty nests of mosses sprinkled by the spray, to gather some flower, to watch the noble flight of an eagle to his lofty home thousands of feet above her, and to wander many hours in that marvelous grove where the majestic sequoias lift their flowered heads to the sky; where the cardinals flashed like scarlet rockets through the sombre green of the foliage, and the brown thrushes soared and sang. The flickering sunlight falling through the branches lighted the aisles and paved them in golden mosaic; the pines sang to her their ceaseless and lovely song, soothing her; and the spirit of the silent woodland brooded over her the balsamic odors so healing to broken hearts and bodies; the soft carpet of pine needles underfoot unknown to herself were gradually restoring her to mental and physical health. She began, as days went by, to regain her poise. Her father's death, which had so saddened and shocked her, became now a dear possession. She was no longer a waif. She had found her family; she knew and understood how greatly it comforted her to know that, somewhere in the wide world, she had living relations. She was no longer alone. She would ask Gilbert — ah, yes, always Gilbert — to look them up for her. By her father's and mother's grave she never lingered. They were tenderly cared for and gay with flowers, but to Marion, those of her adoption seemed nearest to her in the home.

One sweet and placid day, such a day as sometimes comes in

the early fall, as though Nature pauses to gather strength for her coming storms, Marion and Dandy as usual wandered among the monarchs of the forest. She had dismounted and with his bridle over his head Dandy stood by the picturesque little cabin erected as a shelter some distance from the road. A stage coach of late tourists appeared slowly winding up the tortuous road, and Tom was on the box; yes, and Gilbert sat beside him. Why? Marion's heart beat rapidly as she asked herself the question. What new calamity had Gilbert come to ward off? She turned into a by-path, avoiding the highway. The coach stopped and passengers alighted. Gilbert sprang from the box and Tom — her Tom, smiled at her and saluted gaily. "No trouble, Sweetheart," he called cheerily.

Straight towards the waiting girl they came. Gilbert, steadying the steps of a sweet-faced, gray-haired woman, and beside them walked a tall and stalwart man with flowing white beard and flashing steel-blue eyes, so like and so unlike the dear hermit of her love, the father, never known. And now Gilbert was taking her hand and he was saying, "Sweetheart, I bring you great joy. Your grandmother and your grandfather have come all the way from Scotland to find you —" He got no further for the dear little lady ran to the slender figure standing so straight and so quietly in the checkered sunlight of the trees, crying, "My bairnie, my Davie's bairnie, we have come from over the seas to find him — his father and me — and we have found only his grave and — his little lass. Lassie! Lassie!" Her soft arms were about Marion's neck, her tears were on her cheek, and looking into that true and motherly face, asking no questions, Marion folded her strong young arms about the little woman and kissed her.

"Marion," interrupted Gilbert, "here is your grandfather," and Angus Campbell held out his hands.

"My lass," he began, and his voice quivered and broke, "I am not worthy. I shut the door of my heart against the lad I loved and thought I did God service. I have sore repented and sought him and God has smitten me. He has left only you to comfort us. Will you come home with us to bonny Scotland?"

Angus Campbell and wife spent a week at the Inn. Mandy was not well pleased. She confided to Marion that the little

Scotch woman was well enough, but as for that hard-faced, bushy-eyed old man with the iron fists, she couldn't abide him, and if Marion went home with them she'd find that he'd run things to suit himself. "Repent indeed," she snorted. "When his son was in his grave. Nice time to repent. Pity 'twas he hadn't died long ago and give his wife a chance to say her soul was her own — and mind you, Marion — Don't you be the least mite afraid of him. Stand up to him — and if he don't treat you well — you come home —"

Marion arranged with the Kennedys to run the house; bade a tender farewell to her Indian friends and Dandy, went solemnly about all the old well-loved haunts of her childhood, stood by the graves which were now carpeted by falling leaves and she was ready to go. They lingered in San Francisco long enough to purchase necessary clothing and spend a few days with Mollie and the children. Charlie was much in evidence and fully believed in "making hay while the sun shone," but even he could see that not for him nor any man was the sun shining in Marion's heart. She was happiest when, with little Billie on her knee and Gilbert, Jr., sitting on the arm of her chair, she told them wonderful fairy tales or sang, in a low, sweet monotone, little songs for them. Mollie, bustling about, often paused to watch the girl and wonder. Charlie felt repulsed, he knew not why. His ever ready tongue had lost its glibness, and Gilbert resolutely absented himself from them. "Marion," he thought, "should not be troubled. She had suffered enough and he could wait —"

When the day came that they were to start for home he came and brought to Marion his parting gift — a picture of her home, the green and flowery valley, the winding river, the white house with its green shutters and deep porches half hidden in vines, and in the background the little picket fence that enclosed the graves of her dead. Dandy stood in the foreground, bridle over head; Mandy in the doorway, angular and upright, and Tom not far off. With a cry of joy Marion seized this picture, and it was to her during the long and weary months that followed the one link that drew her ever and steadily back to home and her sweet home life. Charlie loaded her with flowers and fruits, and just before starting solemnly presented her

with a little cub bear. "The cutest thing," announced Charlie, "I knew you'd want it. He'll follow you about the house like a dog. I corralled a little Injin too, but Mr. Campbell said he was a heathen and not elect so I let him go — but the little cub —"

"Ye'll no be thinkin' that we can take the savage beastie wi' us, can ye?" questioned Jeane anxiously. "It's no to be thought of."

"Oh, I don't know," drawled Charlie. "One thinks of so many things. Now Sweetheart there —"

Sweetheart looked at him with dancing eyes. She sized up the situation at once, fed the little cub with lumps of sugar and waited.

"I'll no have him," announced Jeane indignantly lapsing into broadest Scotch — "A beastie like yon running about the house, trackin' up my sanded flure, cluttering up things just awful, and, lassie, you'll no be wantin' him — say ye'll not. I'm loath to cross you but indeed it'll grow oh vera sune to be a fearsome beast."

"No, no, Grandmother, we'll not take him. Gilbert, Jr., will be glad to have him for a plaything. Won't you, Gilbert?"

"If Mother is willing," announced Gilbert, Jr., and Charlie in his melancholy drawl droned out,

"'Twas ever thus since Childhood's hour
I've seen my fondest hopes decay —
And when I buy a bear or flower
Why I can't give the thing away —

The day came when they sailed away from that wonderful harbor of the Golden West. Gilbert and Charlie and Mollie and the children stood on the dock and waved farewell. Marion stood on the deck until the last faint outline of the fast vanishing shore was but a mist, then silently she went below. Of the days which followed from early dawn until the stars came out, she was on deck. This new and wonderful water-world was an unwearied delight to the girl — where the white gulls swooped in graceful curves or floated like snowy miniature sail-boats upon the bounding billows; where great porpoises rolled their shining black sides into view as they played be-

neath the waves, and now and then some whale spouted in the distance — and ever and ever the long and swelling billows as they rolled, the white and foaming road left by the steamer, the blue sky seeming to bend and enclose them — all was new and all delightful. Of the life on board she saw but little. Often her grandmother sat beside her, holding her hand, but they were as far apart as the poles. To the older lady the sea was simply a road, and a dangerous one often, to Scotland, to be patiently endured because it was the only way home: to the younger it was the marvelous work of an Almighty Creator, and when the storm came lashing in its fury the billows and tossing the boat like a toy balloon upon its waves, clothed in oil-skins, she was still on deck in some protected corner enjoying beyond all words that magnificent spectacle, a storm at sea. Sometimes Angus Campbell stood by her side, his rugged face braving the storm, undismayed, with that Scotch tenacity which had always actuated his ancestors in times of stress or peril. "It's a rough night for you, my lass — you'd best go below," once he urged her. Marion shook her head. "Well, well, as you will. Scotch bluid will tell and it never bred a coward yet. Stay an' you like. I'm greatly likin' you mysel, and I too am happy in dour weather."

When Tom returned with the stage to the Valley Inn, after taking Marion and her people to the train, he saw to the proper feeding of his "bronchs," and then, as was his custom, strolled around to the kitchen door expecting to come across Mandy. She was not there, nor was she bustling about in her energetic way, hurrying the "dishing up" of the dinner. A sense of loss of something to which he had long been accustomed assailed Tom. "Where is Mandy?" he asked San Lee.

"She gone to the liber, I gless," he replied. Mandy gone to the river and at dinner time. What did that mean? Mandy, not much given to roaming nor to day-dreaming at any time, and never when it interfered with her work. Tom at once set off in the direction of the "liber." At a distance he saw Mandy. She was standing under a massive willow tree, straight and unbending as its own trunk, looking into the water, her hands clasped tightly together. Something in the attitude, he could

not see her face, distinctly assured Tom that all was not going well with Mandy. He went to her and spoke her name. She started guiltily and muttered something about "going at once to dish up," but Tom, masterful now since he had seen her in distress, said, "Never mind, San Lee is doing all right, and I saw Budd in the kitchen. I want to talk to you, Mandy, and it's time you listened to me. Over the pitch there and under the prettiest pines you ever saw in your life I've been busy and I've built us a cabin. I've been years a doin' it, Mandy, and I ain't never said a word about it, but it's just the likeliest place; got a big porch with roses climbing over it, and you can look straight up into the mountains, and the kitchen — my word, Mandy, I jest laid myself out on that kitchen. It's big and light and got a pantry and ice-box and shelves. I made them myself — and a stove which I brought myself from Frisco and a rocking chair."

"What under the sun, Tom Kennedy," snorted Mandy, "do you want of a rockin' chair in a kitchen? I'd never tolerate such shiftless ways."

Tom's eyes twinkled. "That's as you like Mandy. You're to be the Queen of that kitchen, I reckon —"

"I never said so, you're the beatingest man to twist a person's words."

"I've painted her all white," resumed Tom, "with green shutters like you said your New Hampshire home was — and I've got a pretty little cow and some pigs and some hens, and all the time, Mandy, I've been thinkin' what you'd like, for, you see, I've thought some time maybe it'd be home to you. Mandy, the time's come. You'd a good sight better be workin' in your own home than for Budd Kennedy, who, every one knows, is rather short-tempered and none too liberal. I ain't much to look at, but I'm honest and true, my girl, and I'll do my best to make you happy."

Mandy stood silent, but a suspicious mist dimmed the hardness of her eyes. "Do you mean to say, Tom Kennedy, that you've gone and built that house for me?"

"Sure as shootin', Mandy."

"And never said a word about it — you're a greater fool than I cal'lated on —"

"Well, I'm your fool, Mandy; no one else's. Listen here. Sweetheart's gone, and if she come back she'll be marryin' one of them boys. She'll never be at home in the Valley Inn again and you're all alone. Budd and his wife don't need you, for Sarah's forehanded and bossy enough herself — the Lord knows how Budd lives with her — well, it's his business and no concern of mine; but don't you think I ain't seen how things are goin', and they ain't goin' your way much — and I reckon you know it. Now, here's a new place," Tom smiled jocularly — "where you'll have your own way — your own home, Mandy — stage rides free and the best driver in all these parts for your husband. I'm tired askin' you, Mandy. It's now or never. If it's now, God bless you — if it's never, out of this accursed valley I go, and I'll never come back."

Mandy stood quietly looking into the river but not seeing it. She was deeply touched by Tom's devotion, but her New England training and naturally reticent nature prevented her showing it, the building of the house for her appealed to her greatly, at last — at last she could have a home for her very own and Tom's. What would she do if he were indeed to leave the valley? Who else in all the wide world cared for her? Questions that could not be answered. She could no longer stay if bluff, cheery Tom went. She had so long been accustomed to his appearance at the kitchen door and his invariable greeting, "I'm waitin', Mandy." And as if in answer to her thought Tom said, "I'm waitin', Mandy."

"It's mighty good of you, Tom —" and Mandy's voice was softer than Tom had ever heard it — "to be buildin' a house for me all these years, when I cal'late I've refused you nigh on to forty times, and I can't see why you're wantin' me when there's so many clever and pretty girls to pick from. I'll say this — and I had ought to be in that kitchen this very minute seein' to the dishing up — when Sweetheart comes back, and she'll not stay long in that furrin' land — she'll not be happy with that wicked stern old man and that mushy, soft old woman — I'll think about it. I ain't right happy with Sarah Kennedy, though I can't complain and, Tom, deep down in my heart I know how good and patient you've been — Tom! didn't you hear that crash? It's the willow pattern meat-platter like's not," and Mandy was off at a rapid pace to see to things.

Tom stood under the tree and smiled. "I've roped that critter, sure's you're born. She'll pitch and buck a bit, that's only natural but she'll gentle all right. I all'as was a master hand at taming wild critters," mused Tom.

CHAPTER XVIII

GILBERT AND CHARLIE

Gilbert Lee, busy at his easel touching and re-touching one of his wonderful pictures of the Yosemite, working steadily with tight closed lips and bent brows, did not hear the rat-tat-tat at the door which announced a visitor. The door opened and uninvited Charlie entered his brother's studio. "Hello, Charlie," said Gilbert, glancing around, "just a moment — take a chair and a cigar. I'll be through here shortly." The brothers had not met since their return from the Valley after the burial of Marion's father, and now Charlie stood silently fingering his watch chain. Noting his unusual silence — he who always came in like "a rushing mighty wind" with noise and bustle — Gilbert turned and looked keenly at him. It was not the first time by many that Charlie had stood silent before his elder brother — confessed to some debts or delinquency and had been helped out, and now with a sigh Gilbert supposed here was another trouble.

"What's in the wind now, old man? Out with it. There's no use beating about the bush."

"No, there isn't," replied Charlie, straightening his shoulders and lifting his head, "though it's not what you think. The fact is, Gil, I want to ask you a question, and I want an honest answer. How is it between you and Sweetheart? Anything doing?"

A slowly rising flush tinged Gilbert's face, but he replied steadily enough, "Nothing doing yet that I'm aware of, why?"

"Well, you see, you've always known her and you must feel more like a father to her" — Gilbert winced — "and I wanted to tell you that, well, to my thinking she's the only girl on earth, and I — well, Gil, I want to marry her."

Gilbert's faced paled. "And she? Does she know?"

"She does not; I wanted to speak to you first and besides I haven't seen any signs that were lucky signs, and I thought I'd wait."

Gilbert turned and began absently touching in the background of his picture — "Then you are not sure that she cares?"

"No, I am not, but I think I could make her care."

Silence fell between the brothers. Charlie waited but, never patient, was the first to speak. "Well?"

"I think I must have time to consider a little, lad. She has been so upset by the many and strange changes in her life that she has not, I am sure, even thought of being in love with you or any man." Charlie smiled a little at that — he thought he knew girls better than "old Gil." "You must let the child alone. Let her go home with her grandparents and spend the winter and then when the spring comes, if you are in the same mind still and go to her she may understand you better. Possibly she may want to find Madam Neblè and sing. I don't know."

"That's all right, Gil, but suppose she should see one of those Kilties out there and take a fancy to him — What then?"

"Well, if she does I take it that it's not your happiness nor mine so much as hers that we're seeking. Let the best man win."

"If he did, Gil, you'd be the chap. You're right. You always are." Charlie held out his hand and shook Gilbert's heartily. "Let it go at that. I'll try to be as much a man as you are, and I'll wait — but I'm mortal glad that I don't have to buck up against you, for I'd have no chance at all."

Gaily humming a tune, Charlie left the room and Gilbert was alone. He painted no more that day. His had always been a life of renunciation: first when his father died, he had his mother and the children; and he had struggled through college and educated Charlie and Mollie, and had always been to them the old man — affectionately, it is true, but still "the old man —" and to-day it hurt. For the first time in all the years of self-sacrifice he was asking why — why — why must one always give and another always take! He put aside his easel and went to walk. Up those hills which guard the city

he climbed, out farther and farther from the haunts of men, unmindful of distance, unwearied and almost unthinking Gilbert strode along in the solitude; with no eye to see, no heart to sympathise, he fought the good fight. The hours of agony passed. Only God and his own soul knew what the issue had cost him. There must be no rivalry with his brother. He should have a clear field, and then if he failed he would try for her love, and if indeed she only thought of him as Charlie said, well, his life should be hers to guard as far as possible from all ill. Charlie was dear, but Charlie was volatile. He might make her happy, and again he might not. He could not but remember that he had had a good deal of trouble with Charlie in his upbringing, and this was by no means his first love. There was Alice Archambeau, and Elsie Keep and Mary Wilkins. He had been perfectly devoted to each in turn and then promptly forgotten them. "Marion," he told himself, "was different from these girls," but could she hold his brother's affection? and would she love him? That she did not now in that way he was assured, and he had gained time, time for Charlie to get disenchanted if it was to be, and for Marion to know her own heart.

Footsore and weary in body and mind, but serene of soul, Gilbert Lee returned to his rooms. He had fought the battle of his life and come off conqueror.

CHAPTER XIX

MARION IN SCOTLAND

Slowly the dreary winter wore away to Marion in her new Scottish home. It was a story and a half stone cottage with tiny windows set in deep embrasures, and a long and narrow garden fenced in by a high stone wall. The trees were all slipped and pruned carefully, all the cast-off branches saved and tied in little bundles for kindling. Every inch of the tiny garden was cultivated; thrift and economy was everywhere visible in this little Scottish town. Accustomed to the vastness of America, its lavish extravagance and largeness of life, Marion could only liken this new home to the little toy villages with

which she had played in her childhood. She who had always led a life of absolute freedom from restraint chafed under the annoyance of always being "looked after," as her grandmother called the constant espionage with which she was surrounded. If she rode the shaggy pony with which her grandfather had thoughtfully provided her, her rides were rigidly limited, and old Sandy in a long shabby coat and velvet breeches, mounted on a raw-boned steed of uncertain age but always known as "the colt," accompanied her, grumbling every step of the way, for Sandy did not take kindly to leaving his ga-arden for horseback riding, but he was none the less absolutely conscientious, and the lassie was brought safely back to the very minute as directed by her grandfather. If she walked, Elspie must accompany her, also with grumbling, for Elspie didn't like the task of chaperone any better than did Sandy, and Marion rebelled against it all. "It's no' right, my lassie, that you should go about unprotected," her grandmother would argue. "Folks has aye bitter tongues and there would be no end of talk. Your grandfather is an elder in the kirk, and has need to 'luke well to the ways o' his household,' and you should think shame of yourself that you'd be wantin' to rin about alone like the common ones." Thus hedged in; going to kirk on the Sabbath, singing the Psalms appointed by the precentor (organ there was none), with the congregation; walking home, listening to the reading of the Book and the long prayers afterward; debarred from writing letters to Mollie and Gilbert or Mandy; no secular subject broached from sunset to sunset; no secular paper or book opened; no housework done, Marion hated those Sabbath days with all her heart. She tried to keep busy, but time hung heavy on her hands. She began to long for the blessed freedom of her valley home, for the friends who loved her. She wet her pillow nightly with longing tears for Gilbert and Mollie and — yes, Charlie. Even Mandy and Tom, at their distance, seemed angelic to the homesick girl. She lived again in sleepless nights her untrammelled life; rode Dandy through the grand and solemn arches of the pines; saw again the dear valley with its singing river, the rainbow-tinted waterfalls, the shadowy mountains, and the longing grew. She ceased to ride the pony and to walk beyond

the confines of the little garden; she could not eat the oaten cakes and coarse Scotch fare; grew pale and thin and sang no more. Long hours she sat with the hated knitting in her lap, taking no stitch. Spring came; violets opened their blue eyes, feathery spireas shook their snowy plumes and golden gorse began to glow in the fence corners, but Marion took no pleasure in them. She would stand on the little bridge spanning the burn and, listening to the tinkling of the water, think only of home — home and heartsick to be rid of Scotland forever and see again her own mountains. She was standing so disconsolately one weary day when she heard her old name called. "Sweetheart, hello, Sweetheart." Her heart stood still. That name belonged to her past life. Who in all Scotland? The answer was not far to seek, for racing down the hillside from the main road, suit case in hand came Charlie. In the joy of the moment Marion ran to him, Charlie's arms were about her and his kisses on her lips. With a burst of tears Marion surrendered herself to the excitement of the moment, the unexpected coming of one of her home folks.

"Charlie, Charlie," she sobbed, "I want them so. Oh, I want them so! Tell me, how are they all?"

"Why, why, my little Sweetheart, what is this? It's a very pale and thin and sorrowful Sweetheart." He held her off at arm's length and looked in her tear-wet face. "Cry, my little girl, cry to your heart's content, my coat is shower proof —"

Laughing and crying and clinging to his hands, Marion gradually regained control of her nerves, listened greedily for every scrap of news from home, and Charlie explained his unannounced coming.

"You see," he said, "I came in on the *Robert Bruce* — took the little train — such a funny behind-the-time train, Sweetheart, and came on to Althol: Dear me, but it's a forsaken hole, cab there was none, but a grisly old guy informed me that 'the walking was gude,' so I started and I walked and walked until I saw you on the bridge and — well, that's all. I'm here, and if you want to go home you are going."

"Marion! Marion!" came in shrill tones from the cottage door. "It'll be for you to come in now and do your samples. Your grandmither can't abide idle lassies —"

"That's Elspie," explained Marion. "Six o'clock breakfast, seven o'clock prayers, eight o'clock house duties, nine o'clock knitting, ten o'clock samples and so on all day and every day." She was laughing now and she had not laughed for weeks.

Charlie laughed with her, though he could not but see the pathetic side of her story, and then he mimicked Elspie's sharp tones. "You're surely not wasting all the afternoons in idleness?"

"Surely not," she replied, "every hour has its own duty and eight o'clock finds us all in bed, lights out."

"O ye gods and little fishes!" ejaculated Charlie. "Just as I begin to get awake, you go to bed with the chickens."

They wandered along the little winding path to the house, and Marion began to notice the violets. At the door stood Angus Campbell and his wife. They had seen the couple coming home and disapproval stern and certain sat upon Angus Campbell's brow.

"Grandfather, Grandmother!" cried Marion joyfully, "Charlie has come. You remember Charlie Lee, don't you; oh, I'm so glad."

"You are welcome to our home," began Angus, "but it would have been more seemly to have come to the door before," — but his wife broke in timidly and yet it seemed with some courage — "Welcome, Mr. Lee, come right in. Marion, hang the kettle. Mr. Lee'll be wantin' a cup of tea" (she said tay), and all friction was averted for the time being.

Charlie at once understood the restricted life which had so worn upon Marion, and in his heart he vowed to take her home, but he began at once in his eager way to explain that having business in Edinburg he decided to come and see his little friend — that he would have gone to the cottage first but seeing her on the bridge could not resist going to greet her first.

"She's not looking first-rate. She's pale and thin."

"Yes," said the grandmother, "I don't know why the lassie doesn't thrive in our climate. She doesn't eat over much and maybe it's a bit harsh for her."

Later in the afternoon Charlie and Angus Campbell sat alone in the little living room, and Charlie spoke in his direct way straight to the point. "Mr. Campbell, I am in love with your

grand-daughter and I ask you, as the head of your family, for permission to tell her so."

Angus knit his burly eyebrows and set his thin lips in a straight line. After a moment's consideration he spoke slowly. "I thank you, sir, for the honor done our house, but I must ken twa things. What is your religion, sir, and what of substance have you to offer my grandchild in exchange for the home she now has? —"

"My religion, sir? well, you see, we're not very keen on religion as you understand it. We don't lie, nor steal, nor abuse our neighbors but —"

"Sir, I am an elder in the kirk where my father served before me. For a matter of forty years I have gone in and out amongst them — and no blame has ever attached to me, I understand the word of God, and I believe as the larger catechism orders. I wad know how ye stand on the doctrines of foreordination and election. Are ye sound on the doctrines? "

"I don't know much about doctrines," blundered poor Charlie. "When we were little shavers my mother stood us at her knee and taught us this, 'What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God' (Micah 6:8), and somehow she never let us forget it, and it stuck. It's all the creed I know. I've tried to live up to that and as for the other" — stuff he was about to say but wisely changed it to "things. I don't know anything at all."

"It's time, Mr. Lee, it's full time that ye did know and knowin' tak' heed to yersel'. Ye may be elected to salvation or foreordained to eternal damnation."

"Don't believe it!" ejaculated foolish Charlie. "If you had five children would you foreordain four of them to eternal woe and heap on the fifth all the riches of Heaven, and never give 'em a chance to help themselves. What's that text, 'Like as a father pitieth his children' —"

"Sir, sir," — and now Angus Campbell was walking the floor in angry strides. "You, sir, I perceive are in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity. You are an unbeliever — and unbelievers are shut out of the Kingdom — and, sir — I'll no' —"

Here an interruption occurred in the shape of Grandmother

Campbell, staggering under an armful of wood which she noisily dumped upon the hearth. "Hoot, man," she cried, "and what for s'old I be lugging wood for the fire while's you're walkin' the flure and haverin'. Think shame of yourself and come now, do you mend the fire. Mr. Campbell, there's bit o' wark ai the ga-gardin that I'd like you're help in if you be so minded." Thus dismissed Charlie lost no time in seeking out Marion. He saw her at the far end of the little garden. She was sitting on a bench built around a great oak tree, a pathetic little figure in her black drapery, her pretty fluffy hair drawn straight back, according to her grandmother's wishes and knotted tightly on her head; her hands were lying idly in her lap — beside the hated knitting which she was never allowed to be without, if resting. Her head was bent and she was evidently far away in dreams from the surroundings. Charlie, coming upon her there, realized that here was no lovesick maiden, only a little country girl pining for her home, and his heart responded to the silent call. He advanced briskly. Charlie could do nothing by halves, and began. "Look here, Sweetheart. I've just come from an encounter with the old goat in there —"

"Charlie!"

"Never mind, if he ain't a goat I never saw one — from his old gray beard to his hard head, and let me tell you he can do some butting with that same hard head. I've been there, Sweetheart, and he's hammered at me till I feel like a football. Said I, 'Mr. Campbell, I love your granddaughter and want to marry her.' Said he, 'Sir, what's your religion and your substance? Do you accept the doctrines?' 'Don't know 'em,' said I. He ramped up and down and his bushy eyebrows took part in the discussion. I wish you could have seen those eyebrows. 'Sir,' said he, 'this is no time for flippancy. Do you subscribe to the doctrines of my kirk — foreordination and election?' 'Sir,' said I, 'I don't know much about doctrines, never having been brought up with them, but I'd think it a mighty mean father, let alone a just God who in cold, calculating blood would foreordain some few of his children to heaven and send all the rest to hell. I'd not do it myself,' — said I. 'It's not fair —' And then, Sweetheart, he jumped at me, I declare he did, and he

yelled, 'Blasphemer, unbeliever — the rankest heretic,' and at this your dear little grandmother, scenting the battle afar off, came in with a mighty clatter threw down an armful of wood, ordered him — ordered mind you — to build the fire and fired me out here."

Sweetheart laughed — the first clear ringing laugh since she had been in Scotland. "You didn't, Charlie. You never did," between peals of mirth.

"Well," agreed Charlie, "I'll acknowledge that it, wasn't put that way, but I've given you the gist of the matter and now it's up to you, Sweetheart. I want you to know that I'm in earnest, though I grant the beginning isn't very propitious," — Charlie frowned at the recollection — "and I'm much afraid the old goat — excuse me, Sweetheart — 'll never consent. He was so worked up over the doctrines that he never got down to the substance, and when a Scotchman don't get to the substance I'm afraid it's no go. I can't get sentimental just now, Sweetheart, it's been too funny; but if you'll stop laughing a minute I'll tell you how things stand. I love you, my little girl, and I want you for my wife. Will you marry me and come home? Will you, will you?" He took her two hands in his and waited. She lifted her eyes to his face, looked long and searchingly into his eyes, a faint rose-flush dawned upon the pallor of her cheek, her eyes filled with tears. "I do want to go home — I do — I do. Oh, take me home, Charlie," and then more slowly, "I don't know about the rest. I have never thought much about such things. Life has been so full of other subjects, but, Charlie, I don't think —"

"Don't say it, Sweetheart — don't say it. Take time to think. I'll tell you what: I'll get you home somehow, back in the dear old valley and when you're well and strong I'll ask you again. Gilbert said I was to consider your happiness first, and I will."

"Gilbert!" — the name was almost in a whisper.

"Yes, Gil, of course. I told him, and he's a trump, he always is. He said, 'Wait until spring and take your chance, but it's her happiness first.' Now I'm not going to bother you, but don't you think I'm going to give up the ship, not by a long shot — There's Grandmother coming — we'll talk to her."

"Grandmother," said Marion, "Charlie wants me to go home with him, and I, oh, I do so want to go."

"Mrs. Campbell," interjected Charlie, "I love your granddaughter and I was trying to explain it to Mr. Campbell when he jumped on me — I beg your pardon" (Marion's eyes laughed), I mean began about the doctrines, and you see I don't know 'em. Now Marion don't seem to want me just now because she's homesick. You see, Scotland don't agree with her and, dear little lady" — Charlie could be very persuasive when he chose — "can't we get her home again? Never mind me, that'll keep, only the little girl will die here. Don't you see how unhappy and sick she is?"

"Yes, she's thinner and don't thrive," said Grandmother, "it might be managed, but the lassie could never go with you alone."

"Why not?" asked Charlie.

"It 'ud no be respectable and becoming her grandfather's bairn. No — no — I'd never consent to that — there's Elspie."

"Elspie would never go," said Marion. "She don't believe in tempting an overruling Providence, she says, by going on the water wi' just a board a'tween her and death."

Charlie, seeing that his point was gained, cut off discussion by saying, "I'll go down to the little tavern in the village there and with your permission I'll come again to-morrow and we'll design ways and means. Could you not go?"

"I? Oh, no. Angus would never permit that, and we have never been separated."

"Well, I'll find a way, speak to Mr. Campbell and I'll come again to-morrow. Good afternoon, Mrs. Campbell. By-bye, Sweetheart." Charlie lifted his hat and was gone.

After he left, her grandmother sat quietly beside Marion. At length she spoke. "Tell me, lassie, do you love that young man? Your grandfather would never consent."

"Because he don't know and believe the doctrine?"

"Partly that but mainly I think because he was o'er foolish and angered him. I'm fain to say he didn't use any diplomacy in speakin' to him. You see, everybody gives to grandfather and he demands great respect and why should he not and him an elder in the kirk there forty years."

"I don't know," said Marion thoughtfully, "whether I love him that way or not. I love them all — Gilbert and Mollie and

the children. They've all been so good to me, and Tom — Tom Kennedy and Mandy. You see they're all my folks, and until you came they were all I had."

The astute old lady asked no more questions. So long as Marion could couple Charlie's name with them all, including Tom and Mandy she saw no cause for "worritting" but the prospect of leaving Scotland she regarded as more serious.

"I'm not sure your grandfather will consent," she began.

"I'm not going to ask Grandfather," asserted Marion. "I came for a visit and I've had such a nice one, Granny dear, and now I want to go home. I'm pining for home. I'll die here if you keep me. All day I think of my valley, all night I dream of it. I must go after I've been there, perhaps I will come again, but never to live here, oh, never — never!"

"When the door was shut in the father's face the bairn was shut out also," mused the old lady, more to herself than to Marion. Elspie appeared with a pan of food for her fowls, and Marion called, "Elspie, come here. Will you go with me across the ocean to California if I promise to send you back by the next boat?"

"Is it me, Marion, that will be goin' that long road over the watter just to be sent back? Na, na. I'll juist bide on the dry ground. Hoots, hoots, lassie, I'm no going to chance walking on the watter where the boats go down. I'll stay by my moors. The burn is all the watter I want. But," added Elspie, looking kindly at the girl's disappointed face, "when I was at the Manse yestreen getting a setting of agis from the minister's wife I saw the minister's sister there. She's on a visit and I think she'll be goin' back to the States vera sune. The minister's wife and she were speakin' that she'd better go before it was too hot, and I'm no sayin' for certain but it might be that you could go with her, Marion. Your grandfather wu'd be willin' and"—to the grandmother—"she'd best go. She's growin' that spindlin' and one of my hens eats more. I'm wastin' time now, and the hens waitin' for me. Fix it up, and let her go. When she gets home once, you'll see she'll be wantin' to come back to bonny Scotland, for it's well known there's no place like it in all the world."

CHAPTER XX

MARION AT HOME

One glorious, never-to-be-forgotten morning the great steamer, with flags flying, swung into the loveliest harbor in the world, the Golden Gate. Marion was on deck. She had been straining her eyes for the first sight of land, and when she saw afar off the undulating line of shore, tears filled her eyes. "My beautiful land!" she cried. "Never, never again will I leave you!" And then the landing was made, and Gilbert and Charlie (who had preceded her by a month), and Mollie met her and she wept for joy.

"How good, how good to be at home, and to see you all," she sobbed in Mollie's arms.

"Poor little homesick girl," and Mollie folded her close to her tender heart and crooned over her as she would have done over one of her own babies, and Marion rested, soul and heart and body, in that dear and congenial home, until the cool days of August came, and then she went back to the valley.

How beautiful the golden gorse, the little sunflower growing everywhere along the road, the ox-eyed daisies, and gorgeous geraniums! how grand the cloud-capped mountains! How musical the waterfalls! And with what delight she greeted the birds, the little ouzels darting in and out of the spray, singing as they flew; the robins gathered in convention, the nightingales and thrushes, silent now but flitting about. A faint color came into her pale cheeks, and her eyes began to lose their pitiful, beseeching look. She smiled, yes laughed aloud, when Dandy nozzled her affectionately, and she threw her arms around Mandy's muscular neck and kissed her hard cheek repeatedly. Mandy, never responsive but visibly affected, undid the clinging arms and, muttering something about "washing up" fled to the kitchen. And there was Tom, leaning up in the doorway chewing the same old straw apparently, and saying with insistence, "Well, Mandy, Marion's home and — I'm waitin'."

"You go 'long, Tom Kennedy, the house full of folks a waitin' for their dinner, and me at my wit's end to get it in in time. Here, San Lee, take in them chickens, and as for you,

Tom Kennedy, get in there and eat your dinner — maybe ” — as an after thought — “ there’ll be a pumpkin pie and some dough-nuts waitin’ for you later after the folks are off sightseein’ around the place.”

Marion had her own little room. It was kept just as she left it, the pretty sunrise quilt upon the bed, the many colored, knitted rugs upon the floor, both the work of Susan’s busy hands; the dainty white curtains at the windows, the simple shelves filled with books by Gilbert’s care; all — all were to the girl messages of love, and Marion was happy in the only home that she had ever known. Gilbert was domiciled in his studio as usual, and soon their life dropped into its old grooves. They rode together, they walked, they talked, they sang, and Marion often accompanied him into the mountains when he was sketching, with no chaperone, unless Dandy, standing with bridle over head for hours, might be considered one. In their walks and rides and talks Gilbert, by no word, or look, or tone, seemed more than the elder brother that he had elected to be. Charlie, he said to himself, often with close-shut lips, “ must have his chance free and unbiased.” Often Marion, her deerskin dress donned for the occasion, visited her Indian friends. Ahweiha was there and led her always first to the chief of the tribe, for was she not the daughter of the White God, and highest honors must be paid to her? Wonderful baskets, woven so fine that they would hold water, and with such brilliant and beautiful colors woven into their story language, which never were seen by purchasers haunting the valley; marvelous chief’s rugs with the sign of good luck, among all the tribes the Swastika, woven in beaded moccasins and belts of wonderful workmanship, and a dressed doe-skin suit, soft as the down on the breast of the eider duck, beaded and fringed, were brought to her as gifts. The presentation was made with great formality by the chiefs and under chiefs, arrayed in gorgeous robes. “ The daughter of the White God — whose eyes are as the stars of heaven in a dark sky, whose voice is as the voice of falling water and the soaring nightingale, whose foot is as light as the roe upon the mountain, and whose heart is as true as the North Star, ever turning to her old friends; who commune with the Great Spirit to whom the White God has journeyed — deign to accept our gifts and homage.”

And Marion replied sweetly and wisely, "The Great Spirit blesses you, because you are so good, the White God from his home on high is pleased, and his daughter thanks you from her heart. May you prosper and be happy, and she begs you to accept these small gifts from the great city."

Here she presented them with a medley of knives and beads and bright woven cloth: to Ahweiha she brought bracelets and a necklace of jade cunningly set in gold with golden pendants, which delighted that faithful squaw beyond words: to the great chieftains she brought a rifle of finest workmanship, and to the squaws, beads and wools of all colors, and many trinkets of little cost but dear to their aboriginal heart.

So the summer waned. Peaceful and happy was Marion. Red grew the sumachs in the lowlands, golden the grain in the valleys, purple the asters on the hills, and blue the gentians at their base. Parnassia and buttercups blanketed the bogs; golden-rod waved its golden plumes; mountains were clothed in light, mellowed and softened by rising mist, and at night frost crystals, most beautiful, diamonded alike flowers and grasses. Charlie came again and made merry in the Valley Inn. Marion was so glad to see him; like two irresponsible children they laughed and sang and wandered over the hills. It was only when he grew grave and assayed to serious talk that Marion also grew grave and with her intuitive woman's wit warded off the question which she knew that he had come to ask.

One lovely night — they had wandered far that day and were sitting on the steps of the porch watching the late rising of the moon, the little river near by was singing its cheerful song, an owl was hooting solemnly from some tree and a tiny screech owl was calling in shrill tones from another — "Sweet-heart," began Charlie, "you remember what I said to you in the little garden in Scotland?"

"Hoot, hoot," interrupted the owl in the tree.

Charlie, with such a bump of humor as he possessed, could not but smile, but went on seriously. "I am here again to ask you, Sweetheart, the same question."

"Screech, screech," came from the tree, and all the toads and grasshoppers and katy-dids seemed to rouse themselves and begin their concert. It was too much. Marion's clear ringing laugh was joined in by Charlie in spite of himself.

"Hoot, hoot, hoot," cried the owl, and Marion as soon as she could speak, said, "Never mind, Charlie; they've the best of it to-night. You can't be sentimental if you try, and my dear — my dear — you think you love me and you do, even as I love you, but some day you'll meet a girl who'll teach you that you can't live without her. Tell me, Charlie, honestly couldn't you live without me?"

"I might live, Sweetheart," began Charlie, "but I want you — and you don't know —"

"Hoot, hoot," cried the owl.

"Confound that bird, and all birds and beasts and insects! How's a man to talk sense in this menagerie? Let's go in where it's quiet."

"No, dear boy, not to-night, nor any night, for that question. Let the owls have it, for though you don't think so now, after awhile you'll understand. Go home, Charlie, and get busy, and some time later when the owls have gone into winter quarters, come again, but do not, dear boy, indulge in any false hopes, for it cannot be."

"Some one else, Sweetheart? Have any of those Kilties dared to love you?"

"No Kilties, upon my word, Charlie, dared to do so. If they had, my grandfather would have drawn his terrible eyebrows together and said louder than that owl, 'Hoot, hoot, man; dinna ye understand that lassie is the granddaughter o' ye'r elder in the kirk and she's nane for you.' " Marion was still laughing, and as the little owl took up its plaint again she rose quietly, gave Charlie her hand and said, "Let's go in, the dew is falling."

CHAPTER XVI

It was a few days later that Gilbert and Marion stood together in the grove of big trees. Charlie had gone back to the city, alleging business as the reason and Gilbert did not understand. It was growing late for tourists, and the nights were frosty; red glowed the stems and branches of the manzanita, and squirrels were leaping from tree to tree, gathering their

winter stores, and chattering, like gossiping old women, as they worked: on boulders the iridescent *Oxyria* blossomed, and Gilbert, noting these signs of advancing winter and knowing that he must soon leave the valley, looked anxiously at the girl beside him, "Her happiness," he said to himself; "her happiness, first, last and all the time." Then he began to speak of his brother, of his cheeriness and gaiety, of his honesty and industry, of his great heart. "You can't help loving him, Sweetheart, he's so lovable, and he's sure to make his way in the world. He's a fit mate for you, dear, and will make you very happy, and I know he loves you and is very anxiously waiting to tell you so. Don't refuse him, my dear, for indeed he's a fine fellow and will love you all his life. You cannot stay here this long and lonely winter with only Mandy for a companion. I must go back to the city and what will you do?"

Marion glanced from under her long lashes at the speaker. She noticed that his face was white and strained and that his hands were locked together until the knuckles gleamed white from the strain. A glad light sprang to her eyes, a faint smile curved her lovely lips. She was no longer a child, but a woman with all a woman's intuition. "Gilbert," she said softly, "have you ever read a poem called 'Miles Standish'?"

"Yes, I think so, sometime ago."

"Do you remember Priscilla and what she said when John Alden went to plead for Miles?"

Gilbert's face went pale and then flushed to the roots of his hair, "What do you mean? Oh, do you mean? My little, little Sweetheart! Tell me—"

"Why don't you speak for yourself — Gilbert?" Softly, caressingly the name fell from her lips, and that moment Charlie was forgotten, the whole world was forgotten, by Gilbert Lee. He gathered the pretty dimpling maiden in his arms and kissed the smiling lips, and the gossiping squirrels were the only witnesses of this old time idyl, and then in the afterglow Gilbert and Marion stood in the little graveyard by the flower-decked graves of Marion's people. She had a fancy to have her betrothal sanctified here by the graves of her dead, and Gilbert, taking her two hands in his, said solemnly, "Marion, here in the presence of your people I solemnly promise to love, honor

and cherish you until my life's end." Quietly, hand in hand, they walked home, and when the first tiny flakes of snow began to float about the ambient air, precursor of the winter storms, Marion and Gilbert left the valley. The Archambeaus had built on one of the hills a tiny cottage and gladly greeted Marion. "I knew it," cried Mollie, laughing and crying and hugging Marion, when Gilbert told her. "I was sure of it, Gilbert, although you were so sly. How did you find him out, Sweetheart?"

Marion glanced slyly at Gilbert and smiled. "It was a task," she admitted.

"And she had to ask me herself," laughed Gilbert.

"I never did; you know I never did,"—Marion flushed painfully.

"Well, if you didn't, you came mighty near doing it, but never mind, Sweetheart, I forgave you long ago. And, Mollie, we're to have the very nicest wedding, and, what do you think, Tom Kennedy and Mandy are coming!"

A little later there was a quiet wedding in a little wooden chapel built upon the ruins of a great church, and Charlie was best man. "I'll find your mate if she's on this earth," he whispered as he congratulated her, "and when I do I'll marry her." As the last fateful words were said, the prayers ended, and Gilbert and Marion, man and wife, turned to walk down the aisle, they encountered Tom Kennedy and Mandy coming up. Tom, in an amazing brown suit with a resplendent velvet vest lavishly embroidered in red roses, a blue tie and patent leather boots, which made him limp as he walked, and Mandy in a dove-colored silk—"made too large so's to have plenty to make over with"—and a white straw bonnet (Mandy despised hats as too frivolous) trimmed with loops of white ribbon and tied discreetly under her chin. She walked like a soldier ordered to the front, sure of death, but determined to do and die if need be; looking neither to the right nor left, nor at the man by her side, but in her heart proud of him and of his appearance and resolved to make him a good wife and keep his home as it should be kept. "Her house," he had said, and after so many homeless years that little pronoun appealed to her. She glanced half shyly at Tom as they stood at the altar, her

husband soon to be, and she thought him a likely man and was glad and happy that he was hers, but she only said, "Don't twiddle your thumbs that way. What'll folks think? And don't forget that ring's in your vest pocket. You're sure to drop it." And after the ceremony, what congratulations upon this second and unexpected marriage! Tom stood erect and smiling. "I told you, Sweetheart, that sooner or later I'd gentle her — and you see I have."

"Gentle her, indeed," snorted Mandy; "not much you ain't. You may as well know that I'm not one of your bronchs to be roped and gentled. I came of my own accord because you're that shiftin' I jist know you'd let that new house of yours go to rack and ruin for all the broom you'd use upon it."

Tom winked slyly at Gilbert and accepted his invitation to the wedding breakfast, and it was a merry party that crowded around the little table in that little cottage. Of course the children were there and Gilbert, Jr., made the hit of the day when he said, "Uncle Gilbert, what made you let Sweetheart 'rope you in,' and what does that mean, Uncle Gilbert?" There was a general laugh, Charlie's loudest among them, in which Marion did not join.

"When did you hear that, Gil, my lad?"

"Why, I heard Tom tell Mandy that she needn't be afeard that Sweetheart had roped you in and you'd soon be in the corral as tame as tame."

"I think Gilbert, Jr., it's time for your nap," suggested Mollie — wisely carrying off her infant terrible before any more secrets were revealed.

Marion, standing among her husband's kindred, silently and happily smiling, yet cast a sudden thought towards that little stone cottage in Althol where her own, own people lived. She had written them of her intended marriage, and the dear old lady had sent her her love and blessing, adding, "Grandfather says you are to be verra sure that he is not an irreligious man like his brother and that he is sound on the doctrines as becomes the husband of his grandchild — and he an elder in the kirk for forty years." Accompanying the letter was a fine old family Bible bound in sheepskin and one hundred years old. In it were the births and deaths of all the clan — and, joy of

joys, her dear father's name was reinstated in its proper place!

In the salon at Paris there hangs, or hung, a canvas by an American artist which has brought to him world-wide reputation. It is the portrayal of the first faint utterance of the earthquake which laid proud San Francisco low, and a picture of the sudden and awful answer to a young girl's agonized prayer, as Marion always believed.

Upon a dais, slightly raised, stands a maiden with arms and eyes uplifted. She is singing, and as she sings there glows a light upon her face, the passing of womanly terror into the certainty of rescue; the assurance of a reply to her insistent appeal is depicted upon that upraised face. "God is my refuge and strength, I will not fear," she sings, and a holy trust is in the cry. Her beautiful golden hair falls in a cloud about her shoulders; her gown, half torn off, reveals the rounded arms and swelling bosom; but oblivious of all and unafraid, she stands before that awestricken mob, serene and beautiful, calling upon the only Power she knew for help in time of her direst need; declaring in golden tones her certain trust. At her feet, crowded together, stand men and women in evening dress, their faces, pallid and terrified, visible in the early dawn of day which comes in through the window; electric lights shine dimly in the already swaying chandeliers; and in the background fallen pictures, tables and chairs mark the beginning of chaos. The faces of the crowd after that night of frivolity and sin, called by the voice of innocence and faith to a moment's pause, are ashen with fear; upon some lingers the laugh as if frozen; some lips are still curled in ribald jest; and some eyes, unused to tears, conscience-stricken, are shedding them now, as Marion sings. A little apart from the throng, of them and yet seeming not to be, there stands the tall slender figure of a girl. She is robed in black velvet and wears a red, red rose upon her breast; her magnificent blue-black hair is wound with pearls in a coronal around her head; upon arms and neck gleam jewels. Her lovely and noble face is lifted towards the singer, drinking in with feverish joy the hymns of faith; her lips are slightly parted as she listens. Gone from that face all trace of sorrow and sin except that it somehow seems to linger as a faint shadowy mist

over the spirit of the moment. For her the earthquake has no terrors; alone, yet with that other girl seeming to dominate the picture, she stands; her hands clasped and her eyes raised in hope and faith.

Taken from the fallen building after the earthquake and the fire had done its worst, many bodies were laid out on the sidewalk for identification. Among them was a young girl, her velvet gown soiled and torn, the red rose still clinging crushed upon her breast. She had apparently been smothered by the rising dust, as her face was uninjured and she rested as though but sleeping. Gilbert Lee, passing along, saw her there and when he told Marion of the pitiful sight, the girl, so young, so lovely and so friendless lying unrecognized among the dead, she knew it was Lola. "She was kind to me," she sobbed; "but for her I might have been beside her."

"We will claim her, and she shall be buried in our lot," announced Mollie, and so it came about that, surrounded by a little group of friends, Lola's crushed and bruised body found a resting place under the flower-grown sod of the beautiful cemetery, but she lives in all her beauty upon the canvas in Gilbert's great picture beside the girl she strove to save, and to both came the answer to Marion's prayer.

God is my refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble;
Therefore will not we fear tho' the earth be removed
And the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

FINIS

THE CIGARETTE TWINS

BY REX

Bob and Billy were by no means high grade twins, but they were twins, and so far in life, the space of eight years, they were so exactly alike in size and feature that even their mother sometimes was at a loss to know them apart. Billy was the controlling spirit. What Billy thought, Bob thought. What Billy did, Bob did, so far as he was able. Billy planned all

the mischief going and Bob loyally carried out his share. They were the children of Bob Schaffer, a "Ne'er do well" and his wife, Mary, who washed and scrubbed and cleaned and did her level best to make their home at least habitable. What she did, Bob, the father, undid by precept and example. He was, by no means, a very bad man, but neither was he a good one. He smoked a good deal, cigarettes by preference, drank, always when urged, or he had money or credit for a drink, swore on occasion, and was always improvident. All of decency and right living that the twins knew was because of that little hard-working mother. There were other children, a lot of them, but Bob and Billy were the oldest and the heroes of my story.

Together, always accompanied by a mongrel yellow cur, they roamed the streets and alleys of their native city, and together fell into all sorts of mischief. From their babyhood up, they had been cigarette smokers, and were seldom seen without a cigarette in their childish mouths. They would buy the better smokes if they had the money, beg if they could see any likely chance of obtaining the luxury from some good natured passer-by, or steal if all other efforts failed. Smoke they would and smoke they did. They were little fellows, dark and sun dried, not unlike breakfast sausages and had dark old faces unlike those of childhood. They ruled the little court where they lived and the other children stood in great awe of them, for there were two of them to reckon with. When Billy struck, Bob was on hand the second blow. Some one had dubbed them, "The Cigarette Twins" and the name stuck. They were very proud of this cognomen and thought that it conferred great distinction upon them. So thought the other little denizens of the Court and Bob and Billy in their own vernacular were "IT."

One fine evening in May when the one tree that graced Alley Court was putting out its tender green leaves, and the sparrows were already housekeeping in every nook and cranny of the old houses, the Court was alive with inhabitants; men, women, and children, all of them poorly clothed, most of them ragged and dirty, thronged the sidewalks and narrow street, and among them paraded Bob and Billy, each with a cigarette in his mouth, and each with a lordly air of owning the whole place, that was most annoying to the other boys who also lived in Alley Court

and very amusing to an on-looker. Such an on-looker was Dr. Sinclair, a fine stalwart young physician, college bred and something of an athlete, who had come to New York to begin the struggle of professional life. So far Dr. Sinclair had not "got on" very far, because his sympathies and labors were too often enlisted on the side of the indigent classes and the phenomenally wealthy patrons, of which he had read so often, had failed to materialize. The doctor, being of an optimistic nature, did not worry much. He was interested in people and just now was enjoying himself hugely in watching the swaggering figures of Bob and Billy and the envy and admiration of the faces of the common boys of the alley. "Here," said he to himself, "is a pair that will lead. Right or wrong, they will be the leaders and these other fellows will follow. What a power for good. What a power for evil — and they are already smoking cigarettes."

As they came up towards him, the doctor spoke, "Hello, youngsters, which is which? Do you know yourselves apart?"

"Oh yes, sir," answered Billy, always the spokesman, "I am Billy and this is Bob."

"Live here?" questioned the doctor.

"Just around the corner."

"You smoke, I see."

"You can bet we do, say stranger, you haven't a cigarette anywhere about you, have you?"

"Not I, I didn't want to grow up a little dried up runt of a man that couldn't whip a baby. I wanted to be a man. Look how tall I am — over six feet — look at my arm," he bared his arm, "there's muscle for you and you should see me run. You and Bobby couldn't catch me in a month. That's because I didn't ever smoke cigarettes." With the admiration of the small boy for a grown man, the twins stared at the doctor. "Don't you want to come to my rooms and see some things?" he asked. "I've some interesting things there and I wouldn't be surprised if I found some nice things to eat. I don't live very far from here. It's too late now, but come to-morrow morning, I'll be in my office. Here's my card and address." The boys took the card, promised to go and the doctor walked on. "Now why did I do that?" queried the doctor, "what can I

say to those lads to do them any good, but they looked so like little smoke-dried old men that I couldn't resist them."

Promptly at the appointed time, Billy and Bobbie appeared at the doctor's office. Some effort had been made to clean their faces and their hair was plastered down in a wet mass on their foreheads. Each boy had a cigarette in his mouth. "I'm glad to see you, boys, come along in," greeted the doctor, taking each grimy little hand in his strong clasp. "Sit down, Bobby and Billy, I want you to feel at home in my office, I was a boy myself not so very long ago and I like boys around me." On the surgical table, the twins observed a great plate of cookies and nuts, back of these enticing things, they saw a set of mannikins. "Now," said the doctor, after a little pleasant talk which put the boys at their ease, "I want to show you something about the cigarettes that you are smoking. There's opium in them, and that drug stunts the growth of a boy and dulls his mind. Now these men," pointing to the figures on the table, "all started evenly good healthy boys. This one (the tallest) never used tobacco in any form and never drank liquor, and just see what a great fellow he grew to be; this one used to smoke cigars and a pipe and take a drink occasionally. Not so big as the other, but pretty tall. Now this little fellow was always smoking cigarettes. He smoked when he sat down and when he went to bed. Indeed, I fear he smoked when in bed and I know he did when he was eating his meals. Look at him! See his little, thin wizened face, like a dried apple; see how thin and flabby his arms are; look at his little pipe stems of legs and his bleary eyes. He isn't so tall by a head as No. 1, and it's all owing to that fatal cigarette habit. You boys have started down hill like this fellow. You smoke cigarettes all the time."

"Yes sir, yes sir," ejaculated Billy, with no little pride, "they call us the Cigarette Twins."

"Just so, you are twins all right, look alike, are the same size, and both smoke together and all the time. Now I have a proposition to make to you boys. I want one of you twins to give up smoking entirely for six months and I want the other one to go on smoking just as he is doing now. At the end of six months, I'll give the one who has given up smoking fifty dollars, and if at the end of that time you two boys don't find that the

boy I call my boy isn't bigger and brighter and better every way than the one who does smoke, I'll give him fifty dollars also."

Consternation was in the faces of both boys. Give up smoking — one of them — "We've allus smoked together," blubbered Bob, "and it ain't a bit of good talking of one smokin' and t'other not, we allus do things together. I don't think we could do that, sir."

"I saw your mother the other night," gently said the doctor. "She had two or three children hanging to her skirts and a baby in arms. She had a faded old gown on and ragged shoes and —

"I know — I know, doctor," interrupted Billy, "and that fifty dollars 'ud buy her a whole lot of things and the kids — Bob — Bob — I'm on — I'm it, I'm goin' to earn that money. You go on ahead and smoke all you can and at the end of six months when I've got a hold of that there fifty dollars — Holy Gee. *We'll smoke up* —"

"Don't, Bill, don't," pleaded Bob, but Billy had decided. "Fifty dollars don't grow on every bush and it'll do a whole lot for mother."

The doctor watched them silently. Billy, he thought, had force of character enough to stand the test. He wasn't so sure of Bob, but he found himself interested and anxious to make the trial. He measured and weighed the boys and found them exactly of a height and weight, and the thing was settled. "You boys can come to my rooms twice a week. There'll be pictures and music and things to eat and you can then make your report to me. Billy, toss that cigarette into the basket there and not another one must you touch until this day six months. Now, I want you both to sign this little pledge."

"What'll we tell the boys, they'll kid us so?" asked Bob.

"Tell them, it's a bet. All men bet on something."

"Don't sign it Bill," pleaded Bob, "we've allus done things together and I can't smoke alone."

"Oh yes you can," comforted Billy, "it's only for six months and my jinks, kid, you ain't got nothin' to growl about. Don't you think it's going to be darned hard for *me* to give up smoking all of a sudden, but I'm a goin' to do it." Billy signed the pledge and Bob also. "Now," said the doctor, "you have given

me your pledge to do this thing and if you don't I'll call you a coward." That word "coward" hurt. Billy didn't know why, and he went home feeling more sober than he ever had done in his life. So the contest began. Many a time Billy was on the point of throwing up the contract and would go off by himself to "have it out" but always he remembered what that fifty dollars would mean to his mother, and always the fear of being a coward held him. Bobby seeing what a fight Bill was making smoked his little weed secretly and alone, and didn't enjoy it half so much as he used to do, but because of that smoked all the more. As the days and weeks passed Billy began to feel better and brighter and wanted to do things that he never had done — to be cleaner — to learn faster and he began to grow also. His little weazened face filled out, and his eyes grew bright. He didn't look so much like Bobby.

Twice a week the boys went to the doctor's office and they took other boys. They had good times there, lantern slides, a phonograph, basket ball, and catchy little songs that the doctor taught them. They had their own fun also and startled the natives in the alley many a time with that, and they had some good things to eat; and without knowing it these boys were being taught morality and cleanliness and decency. Billy and Bobby were weighed and measured every week and it was a great day for Billy when he was found to be an inch taller than Bobby and five pounds heavier. Bobby dug his fists in his eyes but held to his cigarettes. In the meantime the doctor called upon the boys' mother and explained to her his experiment. Poor Mary wiped her eyes on her faded apron and said:

"I'm sure with you sir, and it's a lot of shoes and stockings, and the rent paid I'm seeing paid with that money."

The great day of settlement arrived. Billy had manfully stuck to his agreement and now he and Bobby and a score of other boys met at the doctor's office for their usual party. But it was not a usual party. On the platform stood some scales, and a white sheet was stretched across the wall. The doctor was a little more quiet than usual; and the boys soon caught the infection.

This was a great day for the Twins. What was going to be done?

"Boys," began the doctor, "I want you all to sit down and listen to me."

He explained the six months' trial of the boys in a few words, and then added:

"Now here are your little friends — the Cigarette Twins — and I am going to place them side by side on this platform. When we began this test six months ago, they were exactly the same size and weight. Six months has passed. One has smoked cigarettes continually, and one has not. Billy and Bobby, come up here."

Diffidently grinning a little, the boys walked up to the platform. Billy was already round faced and rosy, and Bobby still little and thin and brown. Billy's eyes were bright and clear; Bobby's clouded and bleary. Billy was smiling, Bobby was not; and as the doctor measured them Billy stood fully two inches taller. When he placed them on the scales and, wonder of wonders! Billy had gained ten pounds. He bared their arms and showed Billy's muscle, and Bobby's poor feeble thin arms. He showed the science pictures of boys taken each month, and in a few simple words explained the use of the wicked bitter weed.

"For Billy," he said, "I have the greatest admiration. That he could conquer a habit, in the face of all his friends and even his Twin, for no good coming to himself, but to help his mother. I must say I am proud of you, my lad, and because I am proud of you I am going to give you this little watch engraved 'For highest merit.'" And then, he handed Billy the dearest boy's watch and a check for fifty dollars.

"Now my boy," said the doctor, "you can smoke if you want to. Light up!"

"Never," sobbed Billy, too much overcome to speak. "I'll never while I live, smoke any more. It ain't hard for me now; I'm used to it; and say, Bob, you little undersized dried up her-rin', what's the matter of you comin' over and gettin' bigger, and heavier, and nicer like me?"

"I'm goin' to try, Billy," declared Bob. "It will be hard but I'll try."

"Do so, my boy," urged the doctor, "and if you stick it out for six months there'll be a watch for you also."

From that small beginning Dr. Sinclair dated his life's work. He gathered in the boys around him and taught them the evils of smoking, and the joys of right living, and then the Boy Scouts were organized. Dr. Sinclair's boys stood in the front ranks and the Cigarette Twins headed the Honor Roll.

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